

I finished this story ages ago but decided to revisit it and edit it. I wasn't ever completely satisfied with it and being a bit of a perfectionist had to change it. The majority of it is the same but I have changed the tense and some other small changes. Please review!

Revelations

Professor Dumbledore and Madame Pomfrey stood over a girl who was lying pale and lifeless in a bed. The bed was the only one in the small room which was near to but separate to the rest of the hospital wing at Hogwarts.

'How is she?' Dumbledore asked.

'She is better but still very weak. We almost lost her.' Madame Pomfrey answered.

'She's a fighter.' Dumbledore replied and reached out to stroke a strand of long light brown hair from the girl's face.

'She will have to be a fighter to get through this and then all that she will have to face in the future. Although, are you sure this is the right place for her?'

'With all your expertise she nearly slipped away, she wouldn't have stood a chance in that Muggle Hospital. Trust me on this one.'

Madame Pomfrey nodded, 'You always seem to know what is best.'

'Very well, I will leave her in your capable hands. Let me know when she wakes up. I have to welcome back the rest of the students.'

Professor Dumbledore left the hospital wing and walked to the Great Hall

The girl in the bed stirred. She slowly opened her eyes. Her head is pounding. Madame Pomfrey entered the room and noticed the girl was awake.

'Hello, sweetheart', she said quietly. 'How are you feeling?'

'My head hurts a little.'

'If you drink this you will feel better.'

'Oh what is it? Some kind of paracetamol?'

'Paracetamol? What's that? No, it's a sleeping draught mixed with a pain-killer.'

'Oh, ok.' The girl took the small cup that Madame Pomfrey held out for her.

'I warn you it is not the nicest tasting of potions.'

The girl nodded and swallowed the potion in one go. Her face grimaced as she tastes the potion.

'Have a sip of water to take away the taste.'

'Thanks,' the girl said and takes a sip. 'That's much better, thank you.'

'You are welcome, try and get some rest dear. Sleep is the best medicine.' Madame Pomfrey said as she left the room. The girl looks confused, there are so many questions that she wants answering but her eyelids began to feel very heavy as the sleeping draught take its hold. After a few minutes she was fast asleep.

'Good morning, dear.' Madame Pomfrey said to the girl who woke up and looks around her, her face showing confusion. 'Did you sleep well?'

'Yes, thank you, very well. My head feels better as well.'

Madame Pomfrey nodded satisfied, turned to leave and said, 'that's good. We may try getting you to try and eat something later.'

'Where am I?'

'Hogwarts, dear.'

'Hogwarts?'

‘Yes, try not to worry dear you are safe here. Everything will become clearer as time goes on. I shall tell Professor Dumbledore you are awake.’ Madame Pomfrey left the room. The girl sat up in bed. The word Hogwarts had seemed familiar but she couldn’t remember where from. She was still thinking when Professor Dumbledore entered the room.

‘Hello Rebecca. It is good to see you awake.’

‘How do you know my name?’ Rebecca asked. ‘What happened to me? Where am I?’

‘I know you must have lots of questions. I will try and answer them for you. What do you know?’

‘I don’t know anything. I don’t know how I got here, I don’t know what happened.’ Rebecca whispered clearly distressed.

‘Well let’s start with what happened. This may be painful for you but what can you remember?’

‘Remember? I can’t remember anything’

Professor Dumbledore walked over to Rebecca and placed his hands gently on both sides of her head.

‘I need you to close your eyes. Do you remember your mother?’

‘My mother... Mum, I do remember. We live together in a small house. She’s more like a big sister to me than a Mum – we are really close... Oh she’s dead isn’t she?’ Rebecca whispered with tears in her eyes.

‘I’m sorry, Rebecca. Can you remember how she died?’

‘My dad... he was there... he killed her.’ Rebecca said with tears running down her face. Professor Dumbledore removed his hands from her head, sat down on the bed and placed a hand on one of her hands.

‘I remember now, what did you do?’ Rebecca asked.

'I removed the block that had been placed on your memories.'

'Oh.'

'I think that is enough to take in at the moment; you are still very weak and need your rest. I shall come and explain more tomorrow. Try and eat something.' Professor Dumbledore gestured to the tray of food that Madame Pomfrey was bringing in. They left the room together.

I laid back in my bed, my head was spinning. I felt so overwhelmed. Part of me felt like crying, almost expected me to, but for some reason the tears just wouldn't come. I tried and pushed the memories of that night, the night when... when my dad killed my mum to the back of my mind. Think of something else, Rebecca I said to myself and looked around the room for something to occupy my mind. My eyes fell onto the meal that had been left for me. Even though it was the last thing I felt like doing I picked up one of the sandwiches and took a mouthful. It was really hard to eat but I knew that I should try. I managed about half of the food and then lay back down. I felt so tired again, I tried and stayed awake to think about things but my eyes just keep closing.

I awoke to the lady bringing in some breakfast. I smiled at her. 'Thanks.' I said.

'It's my pleasure dear. Well done for eating what you did yesterday. How are you feeling?'

'Much better thank you. I am sorry but I don't know your name.'

'Madame Pomfrey dear and you are Rebecca am I right?'

'Yes.'

'Well here's your breakfast.'

'Thanks.'

'Don't worry if you fall asleep again, you have been through a bit of an ordeal.'

I smiled as she left the room and glanced over at the tray. It was porridge, my favourite. I smiled at the memory of my mum making it for me just the way I liked and she would bring it up to me and I would wake up to the smell of it. I cannot believe that she is gone. I took a spoonful of the porridge. It was delicious and before I know it has all gone. The man came in who spoke to me last night. I think he is called Professor Dumbledore.

‘Did you enjoy your breakfast, Rebecca?’

‘Yes, I did thanks.’

‘I’m Professor Dumbledore by the way.’ He sat down on the chair which is next to my bed. ‘I am the headmaster of Hogwarts which is where you are.’

‘Hogwarts? Madame Pomfrey mentioned that name, it seems familiar but I don’t know where I would have heard it before.’

‘Maybe, your father mentioned it to you as he was a student here.’

‘Oh, was he?’ I said and remembering everything look away.

‘Rebecca, do you know what kind of school Hogwarts is?’ I shook my head and Professor Dumbledore continued, ‘it is a school for young witches and wizards to learn all kinds of magic from potions to defence against the dark arts. Do you believe in magic?’

‘A few months ago, I would have said no, but that night when my mum died revealed a number of things to me. So yes I believe in magic.’ I said. ‘My dad is a wizard, isn’t he?’

‘Yes.’

‘Are you wizards like him?’ I whispered.

‘No, he has become very powerful and is what can be called a dark wizard.’

‘He’s killed other people hasn’t he?’

‘Yes, how do you know that?’ Professor Dumbledore asked softly.

‘That night... when he... killed my mum with a green light from his wand, he boasted about how many people had suffered the same fate, he put the images in my head.’ As I said this some of them flashed before my eyes, all those people he killed innocent people, like my Mum.

‘Images in your head?’ Dumbledore asked.

‘Yes, I know it may sound strange but I seem to be able to read people’s minds, always have been able to. At first I thought everybody could but my Mum told me that it was very unusual. Anyway my dad knew this and made me read his mind when he was thinking about all the people he had killed.’

Professor Dumbledore looked at me strangely.

‘Are you a truth-seeker, Rebecca?’

‘I think that is what it is called.’

‘And you have always been able to read people’s minds.’

I nodded, thinking to myself about how it hadn’t always a good thing.

‘Rebecca, can you read my mind and tell me what my first name is?’

‘Ok.’ I looked deep into Professor Dumbledore’s eyes, cleared my mind and let the connection between our minds happen. The name Peter sprung out at me but I knew that this is a false name, I smiled to myself, I don’t fall for tricks like that, and looked deeper. The real name appeared to me. I closed my eyes which closes the connection and said, ‘Albus.’

‘Not Peter then.’

‘No, Albus.’

‘Well done Rebecca, can you transfer memories as well?’

‘Well I can make them play out like on a screen.’

‘Could you show me? Maybe you could show me what your house looked like.’

Transferring memories took more concentration; I closed my eyes and searched my own brain. I concentrated hard on thinking about what my house looked like and when I was happy that it was strong enough I opened my eyes and looked at a blank wall. I let the memories flow out of my head and images of my house appear on the wall. The front of my house, my bedroom, and the garden. I put my hand to my head and let out a sigh as it hurts a little.

‘Rebecca?’ Professor Dumbledore is looking at me.

‘It just hurts a little, I must be out of practice.’

‘Stop, Rebecca, if it is causing you pain.’

I closed my eyes and pull the memories back into my mind and close the connection to the wall. I opened my eyes again.

‘Rebecca, that is amazing.’

‘Thanks.’

‘Truth-seekers of your ability are very rare. Very few people can learn to do what you have done even after years of studying. You must have been born with the ability which is even more rare as you are a muggle.’

‘A muggle?’ I asked, again the word seems familiar to me.

‘A muggle is the name that wizards and witches use for non-magic people. It is very rare, in fact I think you may be unique, to be a muggle with truth-seeking powers which you have had since birth.’

He seemed thoughtful. We sat in silence for a few moments.

‘Professor? Why am I here? I’m not a witch.’

He looked at me ‘you may not be a witch but your truth-seeking sets you apart from other muggles.’

‘Oh.’ I said.

‘Rebecca, your father after killing your mother turned on you. I don’t think he intended to kill you but he did seriously hurt you. When I heard of your mother’s death and your injuries, I transferred you from the muggle hospital you were in to the hospital wing of Hogwarts. You were ill for nearly a month and there were times when we thought we had lost you.’

‘Why did you bother? Why didn’t you just let me go?’ I said, part of me wishing that I was with my mum wherever she was.

‘Your father has caused enough people to die.’

I looked away. ‘So what happens now?’

‘You will stay here for the time being and when you are feeling better you can start lessons.’

‘Lessons?’ I asked surprised.

‘Yes, I know you aren’t a witch but you have a sharp mind. There is someone I know that may be willing to come and help you improve your truth-seeking skills.’

‘Shouldn’t I go back home, I’d be put into care as there is no one else to look after me.’

‘I am afraid that I believe if you leave Hogwarts there is a chance you will die.’

‘Why?’

‘It seems that your father wants you to be here.’

I stood up, ‘Well surely if this is where my dad wants me to be, then this is the last place I should be.’

Professor Dumbledore put a hand on my shoulder and gently pushed me so I sat back down on the bed. ‘Not necessarily, you will be safe here.’

I covered my face with my hands. 'I don't understand.'

'Your father has become a very powerful wizard. Sixteen years ago he reached the peak of his power and would kill anyone that got in his way. He became much feared by wizards and witches, many still find it hard to say his name. Your father is Lord Voldemort...'

A New Acquaintance

'You father is Lord Voldemort. He tried to kill a young boy, Harry Potter but failed as he was protected by his mother's love who died in saving her son. Voldemort had already killed her husband but he was unable to kill Harry. He lost all his powers. He didn't die though. Instead he became like a ghost desperate to get his power back and take revenge on Harry. Through various ways he has been able to regain his strength and has become human again.'

'That doesn't make any sense, it can't be the same person. I can remember my dad throughout my childhood. If he is this Voldemort person then surely he wouldn't have been around at all. I mean my dad worked away a lot so mostly it was just me and my mum but I can remember he being there on my birthdays and sometimes at Christmas.'

'Rebecca,' Professor Dumbledore said softly, 'it is possible that he put those memories into your mind to make you think he was around when in reality he wasn't.'

'What?' I said, 'I really can't take this in, why would he do that?'

'I don't know for sure what his real motives were but they may have been to create a connection between you and him.'

'Does this mean my whole life has been a lie? Constructed by him?' I said becoming slightly angry.

'Not your whole life, just the memories of him.'

'I can't take this all in, I can't.' I whispered feeling overwhelmed again.

Professor Dumbledore touched my shoulder.

'Could he use me... to do things?'

Professor Dumbledore looked thoughtful, 'it is possible, but you could be taught ways to try and stop him.'

'Why would he want me here?' I asked.

‘Harry Potter, the boy who caused his downfall is here.’

‘What?’ I said loudly, stand up and walk over to the door. ‘Then, why on earth am I here? I could be dangerous to him.’

‘Rebecca, you are strong, you have shown that by surviving everything he put you through that night. You can resist him.’ Professor Dumbledore said trying to reassure me.

‘Well, what happens if I can’t resist my dad... Voldermort? I shouldn’t be here. This Harry Potter deserves to be safe, protected from people like me especially after going through what he has gone through.’

‘What about you? You deserve to be safe. There is no where else for you to go.’

‘That’s what you say, how can I trust you? I trusted my dad and looks where that has landed me.’ I said and turned away from him.

Professor Dumbledore placed both of his hands on my shoulders and turned me around to face him.

‘Deep down, Rebecca you know I am telling the truth.’

I refused to look at him for a few moments but then I gave in, ‘I know, I am sorry, I just can’t take all of this in. I wish I could go back to how it was, before all of this.’

‘None of us can go back, we can only go forward.’

I nodded my head in agreement.

‘I shall leave you alone now, you have a lot to think about.’

I spent another two weeks in the small room. I gradually found myself able to stay awake for most of the day and began to feel more like my old self. My nights were sometimes haunted with dreams about the night when my mum was killed and the times when my dad killed or hurt other people. Madame Pomfrey gave me some sleeping draught which helped me to sleep so deeply the dreams are becoming less

frequent. Professor Dumbledore came to see me everyday and brought me all kinds of books. The books stopped me from becoming too bored and to also understand more about the world of magic.

‘Rebecca, I think it’s time.’ Professor Dumbledore sat opposite me in the chair by my bed.

‘Time for what?’ I said, with a sinking feeling in my stomach.

‘It’s time for you to mix with the other students here. I have spoken to the person I know who knows much more about truth-seeking than me and indeed probably more than anyone and he shall be arriving shortly so you can start your lessons with him tomorrow.’

‘Can’t I just stay here and he can come and teach me here?’

Professor Dumbledore shook his head, ‘Rebecca, you can’t hide away in here forever.’

‘No?’

‘No, it is not healthy for you to be here on your own. I would like you to join the rest of the school for dinner tonight.’

‘Tonight?’

‘Yes, I think the sooner the better.’

‘Ok.’

‘Your true identity will remain a secret from all the students. The teaching staff are aware of it though but will be discrete. I think this will be best.’

‘Ok.’ I said absentmindedly

‘Rebecca, do you understand? No one will know who are. I will introduce you as Rebecca Jones, a student who has been studying abroad. Hence, although you will be sleeping, eating and spending your free time with the rest of the school you will be having private lessons with Professor Chimney in order to help you to catch up in

some subjects and for you to continue in your lessons which we do not cover here.'

'Are you sure this is the right thing to do?' I said. 'I mean, the truth will come out at some point, what will happen then?'

'Let's cross that bridge when and if it comes up.'

There is silence between us.

'Are you ok with this, Rebecca?' Professor Dumbledore asked.

'Well, I haven't really got much choice have I? But, yes I am ok. Besides it will be good to get out of this room.' I said and try to smile.

'I shall be down just before dinner to walk you to the Great Hall.'

I nodded.

Time is a funny thing I have found. When you want time to go by really fast like when you are waiting for a special day or a party or something it really drags. But when you want it to go by really slowly like when you have an exam that you are dreading or an appointment with the dentist it goes really quickly. The latter happened this time as before I knew it Professor Dumbledore was knocking on my door. It was time to go to the Great Hall.

'Come in.' I said my heart pounding, I was so nervous.

'Oh, Rebecca, you are ready. Good.' Professor Dumbledore smiled at me. 'The Hogwarts uniform looks good on you.'

I smiled and tried to stop my hands from shaking. The Hogwarts' uniform felt strange after wearing loose clothing – jogging bottoms, large tops for the time I had been in the hospital wing. It was more traditional than the uniform I had worn at my old school where black trousers and a sweatshirt with the school emblem on had been worn rather than the skirt, tights, tie, shirt, jumper and black cloak I had on now.

‘Are you ready?’

‘As I ever will be.’

We left the room and started walking through corridors.

‘I shall introduce you to the school, and then you will be sorted into one of the four houses. A house for a student becomes like their family. Each house has their own common room, dormitories and their own table where they eat their meals. If good work is done by a student they may be awarded points for the house. Likewise, if a student misbehaves points will be deducted. The house at the end of the year with the most points will be awarded the house cup. There is also Quiddich but I shall let you find out about that for yourself. The four houses are Gryffindor, Slytherin, Ravenclaw and Hufflepuff. Each house has their own strengths and you will be sorted into one of them according to yours.’

‘Which one was my father in?’ I asked. Professor Dumbledore looked at me. ‘Well, surely that will be the house that I will be put in.’

‘Well your father was in Slytherin but that does not necessarily mean you will be in Slytherin, the Sorting Hat does not always pay attention to family connections. Families have been known to be split into different houses.’

‘The Sorting Hat?’

‘A magical hat that decides which house a student will be in.’

‘You mean you don’t decide? Well what happens if I am put into the wrong house? What happens if I am placed in the same house as Harry Potter?’ I said surprised thinking that that would be an awful thing to happen.

‘Oh no. of course not, it is all down to the Sorting Hat. I have no control over the sorting. The Sorting Hat always makes the right decisions. If it is the right thing for you to be in the same house as Harry, which is Gryffindor by the way, then that will be your house. I can not change what the Hat decides’

‘A hat? This world is really going to take some getting used to.’

Professor Dumbledore smiled at me, ‘Oh that reminds me, you will need one of these.’ He put his hand in his pocket and pulled out what looks like a stick. ‘This is your wand. Now as you are a muggle you will be unable to cast magic with it like the rest of the students are learning to do but it would look strange if you didn’t have one.’ He offered the wand to me and I took it. I looked at it for the moment and placed it in my pocket.

Professor Dumbledore continued, ‘you may at times feel vulnerable being unable to produce spells but don’t forget you have your mind. The ability to seek the truth in someone’s mind, what they are thinking and what they are planning is a very valuable one. Many wizards would give up their wands to be able to do what you can do.’

We stopped in front of a huge pair of wooden doors. There was a man waiting there, he was tall and thin. He was wearing a black cloak and glasses.

‘Oh, Rebecca, this is Professor Chimney, your personal tutor.’

‘Pleased to meet you Rebecca, Professor Dumbledore tells me your skills are quite impressive.’

‘Well I don’t know about that.’ I said shyly. ‘Thank you for coming to teach me how to improve them.’

‘I shall leave you now. I will introduce you both shortly. Try not to worry Rebecca, everything will be fine.’ Professor Dumbledore left and walked down the corridor.

‘Now Rebecca, can you tell me why Professor Dumbledore gone that way rather than through these doors?’ Professor Chimney asked.

‘I don’t know.’ I said, wondering how on earth I was meant to know. I looked at the Professor. He is looking deeply into my eyes. It is then that I realise what he wants me to do.

‘I don’t know if I can, I mean I have never tried this without eye contact before.’

'I'm sure you can do it. Just imagine he is here standing with us.'

'Ok.' I said and closed my eyes. I concentrate on what Professor Dumbledore looks like and picture him standing in front of me. When I have a clear picture of him I make the connection between us. It feels harder then when the person is actually standing before me but I manage to ask the question, why did you go that way? It is then as if Professor Dumbledore is whispering the answer into my ear. I opened my eyes and looked at Professor Chimney.

'This is where the students enter. It is customary for teachers to enter the Great Hall by another door which is down that way.' I said pointing the way Professor Dumbledore had gone.

'Well done, Rebecca. It is now time for me to leave you. You should be able to hear Dumbledore and when it the right time to go in.' He turned and left in the same direction as Professor Dumbledore.

I was left all alone. My heart was pounding and it felt like my whole body was shaking. I looked down at my hands and realised that they were shaking, quite violently in fact. I took some deep breaths. All of a sudden I heard Professor Dumbledore through the doors. His voice was faint but I could just work out what he was saying.

'Quiet please, can I have your attention please?' There was silence for a few moments. 'Now, I know it is unusual at this time of the year but we have a new student. Her name is Rebecca Jones and she is in the sixth year. She has been with us since the beginning of term but has been in the hospital wing as she has been unwell. She has been studying abroad in a small school that studies different aspects of magic to what we study here, but it has been decided that she should continue her studies here. She will be sorted into one of the houses and will eat and sleep with that house. She will have her lessons separately though and I would like to welcome Professor Chimney who will be her personal tutor.' There was another period of silence as, I assumed, Professor Chimney entered the room. 'Now, it is time for you all to meet her. I trust you will all be kind to her and think back to your first few days at Hogwarts when you were nervous. This is Rebecca Jones.'

Right I guessed this was it. I tried to open the door with one hand but my hand was shaking so much. I placed my other hand over the door handle and managed to turn it. I pushed open the door and walked into the Great Hall.

Photographic Memories

I was overwhelmed by all the faces that appeared before me. All of them looking at me, I looked ahead and saw what must be the teacher's table with Professor Dumbledore and Professor Chimney sitting there. Professor Dumbledore beckoned me forward, it is then that I realised I had been frozen to the spot near the door where I had first come in. I took a deep breathe in and started the long walk up to the stage where there is a chair that seems to be waiting for me. As I walked I felt everyone's eyes move with me. I focused on the floor and only looked forward. Eventually I made it to the stage. As I walked up the steps onto the stage, Professor Dumbledore walked over to me, smiled at me and gestured for me to sit down on the chair. I did this and a Hat is placed on my head. A voice appeared in my head.

'Well, I have to say I am not used to having to do this other then when the first years are sorted but in your case I shall let you off. Oh yes, Rebecca I can see who you are. Now, Professor Dumbledore has explained what the different houses are to you hasn't he? I know which one you should be in already. As soon as your head came near me, I knew which House you should be in but let's play a little game. Can you guess what house you will be sorted in?' I paused not knowing what to think or say. 'Come on, humour me. It is not everyday that I am presented with a mind such as yours.' I thought Slytherin then.

'Slytherin, you think and that's because your father was in that house. Well you could be in that house. But the problem is that you are nothing like your father so unfortunately no, you won't be Slytherin.' Well Ravenclaw or Hufflepuff then I thought. 'You don't mind which then, oh I see, you don't really mind what house as long as it isn't Gryffindor.' Please not Gryffindor I thought. 'Well, I am afraid to say that the house you will be in will be..'

The Hat shouted Gryffindor out. The table, which I assumed was Gryffindor, all stood up, clapped and smiled at me. The Hat was taken off me by Professor Dumbledore who whispered in my ear.

'It's ok Rebecca, remember what I said. Go and sit with your house.'

I managed somehow to walk down the stairs and to the table. A space was made for me between two girls. One with long ginger hair and the other with curly brown hair. The girl with ginger hair turned to me.

‘Hello, Rebecca. Welcome to Gryffindor. My name’s Ginny Weasley. We are in the same year.’

‘Hello, it’s nice to meet you.’

‘And I’m Hermione Granger.’ The girl on the other side of me said.

‘Hello,’ I said.

‘Professor Dumbledore said that you have been studying other aspects of magic. What are they?’

I was saved from having to try and come up with an answer by a boy opposite us who had ginger hair.

‘Oh, Hermione, the girl has only been here for five minutes and you are already asking her questions about what she has been studying.’ This seemed to quieten Hermione. The boy turned to me ‘Sorry about her, she’s a little study obsessed.’ He said the last bit in a whisper. Hermione looked away embarrassed. ‘I’m Ron by the way, one of Ginny’s older brothers, you may have noticed the family resemblance.’ I smiled at him as he gestured towards his hair.

‘Poor me, I have six older brothers. Do you have any brothers and sisters?’

‘No, I am an only child.’ Part of me had always wanted a brother or sister and I had always wondered why Mum and Dad hadn’t had any other children. But now I guess I knew why.

‘Oh like Hermione and Harry then,’ Ron said. I looked up.

The boy next to Ron said, ‘Pleased to meet you, I’m Harry, Harry Potter.’

I looked at him in surprise. ‘You’re Harry Potter?’

He nodded shyly.

‘Yes, he is the famous Harry Potter, who stopped You-Know-Who once and has escaped for him another time. He is so famous even you know of him.’ Ron said clearly proud of his friend. ‘Hey do you want to see his scar?’

I glanced over at Harry, he looked embarrassed and uncomfortable.

‘No, it’s ok. Sorry, Harry it must get pretty annoying with everyone knowing who you are.’

He looked at me and seems surprised, ‘yes it does sometimes. How did you know?’

‘Lucky guess,’ I said.
At this point our plates were suddenly filled with food.

‘Oh good, food, I’m starving.’ Ron said and started digging in.

While we ate, I took the opportunity to look at Harry. He wasn’t really what I imagined to be like. He seemed so young, he must have only been a year older than me. I pictured him to be bigger and stronger looking. Harry looked so vulnerable. I couldn’t believe that he had stopped my father. His eyes looked sad, even though he smiled and laughed at jokes it is like is carrying a huge burden. At that moment, I felt an overwhelming sense of wanting to protect him from never having to face anything bad again. I tried and eat something and actually do much better than I thought I would do I looked around the hall, there seemed to be an endless number of students. The noise level seemed so loud after being in that room all on my own for so long with only Madame Pomfrey and only Professor Dumbledore for company. I looked over at Professor Dumbledore who smiled at me and pointed to his head. I was confused for a moment as to what he meant but realised he wanted to say something. I concentrated hard on him and made the connection. The connections are becoming easier. Hello I said once the connection is in place. I could hear him say ‘hello, how are you getting on?’

‘Fine, I think.’

‘What do you think of Professor Chimney?’

‘He knows his stuff, seems friendly but I am sure he will work me hard.’

‘It’s good to see you settling in.’

I smiled, ‘well maybe this isn’t going to be as bad as I thought it would be.’

Once the meal was over, I walked up to the common room with the rest of the Gryffindors. The portraits with the people in it that moved really fascinated me and as for the moving staircases, Hogwarts seemed so strange and full of things which the rest of the students took for granted but amazed me. The common room looked very homely.

Ginny turned to me, ‘I expect you will be sleeping in my dormitory. Do you want to go up now and unpack?’

‘I don’t think I have anything to unpack, but I would like to see the dormitory.’ We walked up the spiral staircase and into one of the girls’ dormitories. The room contained five four poster beds. Ginny walked over to one of them.

‘This one must be yours, it wasn’t here this morning. Oh look there is your trunk.’

‘My trunk?’

‘Yes.’

I walked over to the bed where Ginny is and saw that there is indeed a trunk on it. I paused before opening it. Inside were some things from my house and a note. The note read

Rebecca,

I had some things collected from your house. If there is anything else you would like, please just let me know.

Professor Dumbledore.

It felt so strange seeing things from my house in the trunk, things I hadn't seen for over a month. There was my teddy bear which I had had since I was small, some jewellery my mother gave to me, some books, clothes and a photograph of my mother and me. I took out the photo, it is my favourite photo. It was taken by a stranger when we were on holiday last year. Mum said something really funny just before it was taken so we are looking at each other in fits of giggles. It looks so natural and really captures what the relationship between us was like.

'Why aren't you moving?' Ginny asked me. I had forgotten she was in the room. I breathed deeply trying to stop the tears that are threatening to come on seeing my things and the photo.

'It's a muggle photograph, my mother was a muggle.'

'Oh, your mother was a muggle, does that mean she's...'

'Dead, yes.'

'Oh, I'm sorry Rebecca. I will leave you alone to do your unpacking. Through that door is the bathroom.' She pointed to a door on the other side of the room. I will be down in the common room if you want to talk or ask any questions.'

'Thanks, but I think I will just unpack and then get an early night.' I said smiling.

Ginny smiled back and left the room. I stroked the photograph, I couldn't believe that she was gone, she looked so alive in the photograph. I placed it down on the table next to my bed and began to unpack. I found that Professor Dumbledore had thought about pretty much everything I could ever want from my house and felt happier once there were some familiar things around me. I got ready for bed and climbed into bed. It was so comfy that as I placed my head down on the pillow my eyelids became very heavy.

Learning something new

'Wake up sleepy-head, it's time for breakfast.' I awoke to Ginny gently touching my shoulder. 'Did you sleep well?'

'Yes, I did, very well.'

'Well, I shall leave you to get ready. Do you want me to wait for you in the common room so we can walk down to the Great Hall together?'

'Thanks that would be great as I am not completely sure about the way. I won't be long.'

About ten minutes later after a quick shower, getting dressed and putting my long hair into a neat bun I met Ginny in the common room.

'You weren't long.' Ginny said

'No, the fact that I am hungry motivated me to go quickly.'

Ginny smiled and we headed out of the common room for the Great Hall.

'So is your dad a muggle as well?' Ginny asked. I must have looked a bit surprised at her question as she continued, 'sorry, I am so nosy.'

'No, it's ok. My mum was a muggle but my dad is a wizard but I don't know him at all. I don't think him and my mum got on very well.' Well that was the truth wasn't it I mean he did kill her.

It wasn't long until we were at the Great Hall.

'Hello Rebecca and Ginny, come and sit here', it's Harry who gestured to two spaces near him, Ron and Hermione. I smiled at them all and sat down. In front of me is what looks like the hugest breakfast I have ever seen in my life. I picked up some toast and began to eat. The conversation over breakfast revolved around the subjects which they would be having today. They seemed to be so strange.

'Where's your timetable, Rebecca? We always get ours the morning after our first night back.' Hermione asked.

I was just about to reply that I didn't seem to have it when Professor Chimney appeared and handed me a piece of paper.

'Thanks,' I said as he walked off.

I unfolded the piece of paper

Rebecca,

When you have finished your breakfast please come and find me. You don't need to bring anything with you, only your mind.

Professor Chimney

'That's a bit cryptic, isn't it,' Harry said reading the note over my shoulder. 'How are you supposed to know where he is when he hasn't said what room he will be in.' Up until that moment I had been wondering the same thing but now I realised that it was another test.

'Oh, I assume that he will be in the room where we met last night before we were introduced.' I said quickly trying to cover up how cryptic the note was.

'Why don't you need anything other than your mind? What lessons exactly will you be doing?' Hermione asked.

'Well, maybe he will provide anything else that I may need. I think we shall be discussing my curriculum today.' I said hoping that this would placate the obviously clever girl.

I took another sip of water from my glass.

'I suppose I better be going, I don't want to be late. Do we all meet here for lunch?'

'Yes,' Ginny answered. 'Good luck.'

'Thanks,' I said getting up.

As I walked down the hall, I was already trying to picture the Professor carefully. I paused when outside the doors to the Great Hall, closed my eyes and concentrated. It seemed a lot harder this time to make the connection but eventually I do and ask the question, where are you? The reply came back as turn left and then walk past five doors and then take a right turn and the room is the first room on the left. I opened my eyes and closed the connection. Following the instructions I came to the door I had been directed to. I knocked on the door but there wasn't any answer. I turned the handle and walked in. The room was empty, it looked like a classroom which hadn't been used for a long time.

'Professor?' I called out but there isn't any reply. I then noticed the message on the blackboard.

Try again, Rebecca. Look deeper.

I sighed and left the room. Outside, I closed my eyes and pictured Professor Chimney and made the connection. I asked the question where are you? The reply came, didn't you follow the instructions, I am where I said I would be. No you aren't, well you aren't there anymore only a message on the board. Where are you really? This time there was no reply. Fine, I thought to myself I shall find out for myself. I made the connection stronger between my brain and the Professor and started to search through memories. This took much more concentration than what I had done before and I started to feel my head hurt a bit. I bit my lip while I searched. Finally I found the one I was looking for, the route he took after leaving me the message on the board. I double-checked that I knew where I was going and closed the connection. When I closed the connection, I found myself stumbling back. I placed my hand on the wall to steady myself. It always took more effort to find out things that people really didn't want other people to know. I took some deep breaths and started to walk the same route Professor Chimney had taken. I came to a door which I knock on. This time there was a reply.

'Come in.'

I breathed a sigh of relief and entered the room. It was quite small with books lining the walls, two small tables and two armchairs were

in the middle of the room. Professor Chimney was sitting in one of the chairs drumming his fingers on the arm.

‘Sorry,’ I said. ‘I should have known you wouldn’t have given me the answer that quickly.’

‘No you should have realised that more often then not people will give false answers which seem believable when they are trying to hide something. But you have to look beyond that. Well done, though for thinking about following one of my memories. Please sit down.’

I sat on the chair opposite him.

‘Now, I am even more aware of your abilities I can see what we will need to work on first. I could tell exactly what you were doing when you were searching my memories and could have stopped you or put up another false answer. I didn’t do this as I could sense that you were feeling pain.’

‘My head hurt a little, it’s better now.’

‘You will need to make yourself invisible in someone’s head, so they are not aware you are there. Otherwise, you will give yourself away and if you were connected to the wrong person you could be hurt. The connection you make can become a two-way connection and the other person, if they know what they are doing can cause you some harm. Let me demonstrate. I want you to make a connection with me. Look for a childhood memory.’

I paused, thinking about how this is going to hurt.

‘Rebecca, I won’t hurt you badly I just need to demonstrate what could happen and how important it is for you to become invisible in someone’s brain.’

I have to trust him I said to myself and made the connection. It happened much quicker this time as he was front of me and I could make eye contact. I started to look through his memories. I could feel that he put a barrier between me and the memories. I had no other choice but to strengthen the connection even though I knew that this

will make me more vulnerable. I got closer to finding the memory when suddenly I heard a voice in my head,

‘Rebecca, I can feel you in my head, and I am afraid that I don’t want you to be there. You will feel pain in your head...’ As the words are said I felt a sharp pain in my head. I cried out in pain, the voice continued ‘your breathing will become quicker, your heart rate will increase, you will suddenly feel faint...’

All of these things happened, I gripped the arms of the armchair and tried to slow my breathing. ‘Your body will start to hurt all over and then I will break the connection.’ No, I thought to myself, only the person who makes the connection should break it, no one had ever taught me that but it just made sense to me. I felt a sinking feeling as my body began to hurt all over. I could feel tears running down my face as I tried to ignore the intense pain that I was feeling and closed the connection but it was too late. The connection was broken. It felt like I was being thrown from a tall building and landed on a hard concrete floor. Everything turns to black.

‘Rebecca?’ I opened my eyes slowly, and winced as the pain came back.

‘Rebecca? Can you sit up for me?’ I realised that I must have fallen out of the chair. With much effort I managed to pull myself back into the chair. I noticed that my whole body was shaking.

Professor Chimney was looking at me, concern in his face, ‘I’m sorry Rebecca that I had to be so hard on you but I needed to make you realise how vulnerable you are. You are even more vulnerable as you have only your mind to protect you. Now, after I had broken the connection, I could have simply killed you. Well done for trying to close the connection, this should have happened as soon as I ‘discovered’ you but that would have been very hard to do. Please have some of this potion, it will make you feel better.’

I paused before taking the potion, I had believed him before and look where that had got me, I had turned into a shaking wreck who was in a lot of pain.

‘I know it’s hard but you are going to have to trust me. There are going to be times ahead when you may feel that I push you too far or cause you unnecessary pain but I want you to know that I am only doing it to benefit you in the long run.’

I took the potion, and drunk it in one go. It did ease the pain which faded away to a dull ache.

‘Thanks,’ I said ‘That feels much better.’

‘Good. Now I would like you to read this book while you recover and tell me what you think. Reading materials for truth-seeking are hard to find as the Ministry of Magic tends to look down on people trying to learn the skill as it can be so easily misused. I have, however, managed to get hold of some books for you to look through. I expect though that we will mostly be concentrating on the practical aspects but it may be beneficial for you gain background knowledge about truth-seeking. This one is a basic introduction, a handbook you may call it for people who are just starting on the long and very difficult journey to become a truth-seeker. Most of it you will be able to do without really thinking about it but there is a rather interesting and useful chapter about how to make yourself invisible when you are in someone’s mind.’

‘Oh, thanks.’ I said and quickly looked through the book.

‘I shall leave you to read it in peace; I will be back in about an hour, just before lunch actually, to answer any questions that you may have. There is some paper and a quill should you want to make any notes on the table there.’

Professor Chimney closed the door behind him. I settled myself more comfortably into the chair and turned to the first page and started to read. I became engrossed in the book. I had never read anything about truth-seeking before, anything I had ever done had always come naturally and it seemed strange to me that people would be able to learn what I could do. Professor Chimney was right though in his thinking, I did think that I could do most of the things that were covered in the opening chapters. I took a piece of paper and the quill from the table and made a list of things that I should try out. I came to the chapter about making yourself invisible. I scribbled down the

steps. According to the book it was a three step process. First of all you had to consider yourself as being invisible, picture someone being able to look straight through you and walk through you as if you weren't there. Then you make the connection with the other person's mind but consciously cover the connection with what seems like a thick blanket in order to muffle the effects of entering someone's brain. Once the connection had been made you have to concentrate on being invisible, the book said to imagine walking along a beach and looking back and there would be no footprints in the sand. I wrote down the steps carefully and finished reading the book. I had only just put the book down and was reading through my notes when Professor Chimney returned.

'Well, how have you got on?'

'It is a really interesting book especially about making yourself invisible.'

'Do you think you could do it?'

'I would really like to try it out.' I said.

'Well we shall, after lunch though. When you have had something to eat come straight back here. Well done for your first lesson. I shall see you after lunch, you can go now. Leave your notes here.'

'Thanks,' I said and got up and headed for the door.

Night Time Memories

I certainly had a lot to think about as I found my way back to the Great Hall. What had happened had shaken me up but I supposed it was better that I found the flaws in my truth-seeking knowledge in the safe environment of a classroom rather than when facing an enemy. I was rather looking forward to my lessons after lunch to really test what I could achieve. I reached the Gryffindor table and saw Harry, Ron, Hermione and Ginny already sitting there. Ginny spotted me, smiled and beckoned me over.

‘Hey, Rebecca, how did your lessons go?’

I sat down next to Ginny. ‘Not too bad actually.’

‘Are you sure? You look a little pale.’ Ginny asked concerned.

‘Oh, do I? I suppose that may be because I have been tested on what I know.’

‘Was it hard?’ Hermione asked.

‘Yes, I certainly still have a lot to learn.’ I said picking up a sandwich. ‘How were your lessons?’

‘Well, I had Care of Magical Creatures with Hagrid, and Divination. Both of which were fine.’ Ginny said.

‘Lucky you,’ Ron said. ‘We had Transfiguration and Potions. Both Snape and McGonagall have given us a pile of homework to do.’

I knew that Professor McGonagall was the head of Gryffindor house as she had spoken to me briefly last night. ‘Which one’s Snape?’ I asked.

‘He’s sitting next to Professor Dumbledore. He is the head of Slytherin which means he automatically hates us Gryffindor.’ Ron said.

I looked at the man who is dressed all in black. ‘He certainly looks like you wouldn’t want to cross him.’

‘No you wouldn’t, believe me.’ Ron answered.

‘Oh Ron, he really isn’t as bad as you make out. He may be better if you actually paid attention in class and stopped mucking about with Harry.’

Ron did not look impressed by this comment from Hermione and concentrated on eating.

‘Right, I have finished. I am going to have a walk around the grounds before I go to afternoon lessons.’

‘You haven’t eaten much,’ Harry said.

‘I never do at lunch.’ I replied. The truth was I was feeling a little strange from my morning lessons and also a bit nervous about what was to come this afternoon. ‘Anyway I shall see you at dinner. Hope your lessons go well this afternoon.’

They all said goodbye. I walked down the Great Hall and walked outside. It was a lovely sunny day, probably one of the last of the summer. I told myself that I must try harder to eat even when it is the last thing that I want to otherwise they may want to know more about the lessons and something inside of me told me to keep it to myself. I looked at my watch I saw that I had about half an hour before afternoon lessons started. It was really peaceful in the grounds with only a couple of students milling around, the majority of them still in the Great Hall. I couldn’t help but start to compare Hogwarts to my old school. For a start my school, just an average comprehensive, was not surrounded by countryside more like houses and the occasional tower block. My school was considered lucky as it had managed to keep its small playing field when most of the surrounding schools had sold theirs to developers for yet more houses. The buildings were mostly temporary apart from the main building which was the oldest part of the school having been built in the 1900s or something like that. I had always liked that part of the school best although the heating wasn’t very good in the winter and we always boiled in the summer as the windows wouldn’t open very wide.

Hogwarts though looked as though it had been here forever, it was so pretty. My thoughts turned to my friends at school. I was by no means

popular, for one thing I actually liked school and wanted to do well and probably the main thing which put people off was that I had been placed in the year above what I was meant to be in. This had happened in primary school when a teacher had despaired over what to give me to keep me occupied. I wasn't a genius; I just could understand things quicker than other people and so often would only need one explanation of a new exercise or concept where my peers would need two or three. I also loved learning and would spend most of my spare time reading and asking my Mum about anything I didn't understand. As I was one of the oldest in the year as I was born at the beginning of September, the solution to challenge me was to put me in the year above. Mostly, it had been ok but I did find it hard to make friends. Even though in some cases I was only a month younger than my class mates, some of them were reluctant to accept me and believed that I thought I was so clever and better than them. My closest friends were two girls called Lianne and Jessica. I wondered what they were doing now, I suppose they would be at school getting into their A levels. I wonder if they thought about me, Professor Dumbledore had told me that anyone who knew me had been told that my mother had died and a distant relative had taken me to live with them. Thinking about it I did really miss my old life. I sighed and decided that I could be early for my afternoon lesson and walk back up to the school.

I reached the classroom much quicker this time without having to take a detour. The room was empty; I took my notes from the table, sat down on one of the chairs and read through them. I came across the page where I had written down the steps to make you invisible in someone's mind. It seemed to be so easy written down like that but I had a sinking feeling that it really wouldn't be the easiest thing I had ever done.

'Am I late?' It's Professor Chimney.

'Oh no, I finished lunch early so thought I would read through my notes.'

'How are you feeling after this morning?'

'Fine.'

‘Really?’ Professor Chimney said raising one eyebrow.

‘Well I didn’t really fancy much to eat at lunch and I do have a slight headache but apart from that I am fine.’

‘Well hopefully this afternoon won’t be as dramatic. Now, I am not saying that it will be easy but I will be easier on you. It may take some time for you to learn how to make yourself invisible in someone’s mind but as you learnt from this morning it is very important for you to master.’

I nodded. He took the chair opposite me.

‘When you are ready, Rebecca, make the connection so that I know you are in my mind and then try and make yourself invisible. If you are successful I should feel a slight change. Eventually you will have to learn how to make yourself invisible at the same time as making the connection but we shall take one step at a time. Nothing will happen though if you are unsuccessful, I just would like you to try again. Is this all alright with you?’

‘Yes,’ I said. I felt slightly nervous as I made the connection with Professor Chimney’s mind. I took a deep breath and remembered the first step. I had to consider myself to be invisible. I pictured myself in a corridor, I saw one of my friends, I called out to them but they blanked me. I called out again and moved towards them, I reached out and touched their arm but there was no response. I then stood in front of them but they walked right through me. Something changed in the connection between my mind and Professor Chimney. Right, I will take that as a good sign I thought. The second step involved covering the connection. I pictured the connection as being like a thin wire or piece of string. I imagined that I was covering the connection with a thick blanket. The connection between our minds changed again. Everything seemed to be going well although quite slowly. I turned my attention to the third step and concentrated on remaining invisible. I took the book’s advice and pictured myself on a sandy beach. The beach was empty and I was walking along by the sea. I looked behind me and imagined that I couldn’t see any footprints. Once again the connection between our minds changed slightly. I realised that I felt a little bit light headed and found it difficult to

concentrate on being invisible. The picture in my head of walking along the beach became blurry and I started to feel really heavy and it felt like I was sinking down into the sand.

‘Rebecca?’ Came Professor Chimney’s voice ‘I can feel you, do you want to close the connection?’

I closed the connection and opened my eyes slowly.

‘How are you feeling?’

‘A little dizzy, I did feel a bit light headed but that seems to be going now.’

‘Well, I think you were invisible in my mind for about five minutes.’

‘Five minutes? Are you sure? It really didn’t feel that long.’

‘Well, it was. Well done, that is brilliant for your first attempt. We shall have a little break and then try again. How does that sound?’

‘Fine,’ I smiled. I was rather pleased with myself that I had managed to make myself invisible for five minutes. I knew that this wasn’t long enough but hopefully next time I would be able to increase the time.

I lost count of the number of times I made myself invisible in Professor Chimney’s mind. After each time he would suggest that we could stop but I would always want to try again and increase the time I was invisible.

‘Fifteen minutes, Rebecca. Now I really think that is enough for today.’

My head was spinning and I nodded my head. ‘How long do you think I should be aiming for?’

‘Well we have achieved so much today. I think maybe an hour would be enough. You shall of course have to try and make yourself invisible at the point of connection which may be more difficult. There are also ways that I could try and put you off maintaining your invisibility but all in good time.’

I nodded. I looked down and realise that my hands were shaking. Professor Chimney noticed.

‘Would you like to go and have a lie down before dinner?’

I looked at my watch, there was about an hour to dinner.

‘Are you sure? Isn’t there something else I could do?’

‘Rebecca, honestly I thought I would have to push you but it is looking like I am going to have to stop you pushing yourself too hard.’

I smiled, ‘I know. I suppose I haven’t done anything to really challenge me for a while so this has come like a breath of fresh air.’ I looked down and continued, ‘I also want to be as good as I can be so my father will find it harder to do whatever he has planned for me.’

‘Well, I want you to know that you are doing really well but I don’t want you to burn out so go and have a lie down before dinner.’

I got up slowly, the room seemed to spin a little, I grabbed the back of the chair.

‘Rebecca?’

‘I’m fine, just a little dizzy. Is there any homework? Any reading or anything you would like me to do?’

‘Nothing. Just have a good night’s sleep and try and eat something at dinner.’

‘Ok,’ I said smiling. I walked slowly out of the classroom. The corridors were empty as lessons were still carrying on. I managed to make it upstairs to the dormitory. I laid down on my bed. I closed my eyes but found that my head was spinning so much. I curl up and lay completely still.

I must have drifted off, as I woke to hear Ginny calling my name.

‘Rebecca? Are you ok? Professor Chimney sent me to get you for dinner.’

I opened my eyes slowly. I realised that I felt sick.

‘Yes, I think so. I must have fallen asleep. I shall just go to the bathroom.’

I got up slowly as each time I moved the feeling that I was about to throw up increased. I made it to the bathroom before I did indeed throw up. I took a sip of water and washed my face before heading back to the dormitory. Ginny was sitting on my bed looking concerned.

‘Are you sure you are ok?’

‘I feel better now. Shall we go down to dinner?’

Ginny looked at me curiously every so often as we walk down to the Great Hall together. I found myself unable to talk as I was worried that I would be sick again.

I sat down next to Ginny and Hermione opposite Harry and Ron.

Harry looked at me, ‘Rebecca, are you ok? I thought you looked pale at lunch but you look worse now.’

‘I am not one hundred percent but honestly I am fine.’

‘What on earth have you been learning? I thought Potions with Snape was bad but you look dreadful.’

‘Thanks.’ I said quietly, hoping that the conversation would move on. I looked down at my plate. It was chicken with new potatoes which was always one of my favourite meals. I forced myself to eat something and found that it wasn’t as bad as I thought.

‘Maybe you should go and see Madame Pomfrey,’ Hermione said kindly.

‘I shall see her after dinner. How were your afternoon lessons?’ I found myself only half listening to their answers. I managed to eat

everything on my plate which seemed to please Ginny who was still looking concerned about me. I decided that I will make a visit to see Madame Pomfrey and headed off to the hospital wing whilst the others headed to the common room.

I found Madame Pomfrey in her little office.

‘Hello,’ I said.

‘Hello, Rebecca dear. How’s your first day been?’

‘Good.’

‘Well you look a little pale, I hope Professor Chimney hasn’t been working you too hard.’

I looked down, ‘actually I think I may have pushed myself too far. I was sick earlier and I still feel a little dizzy and have a slight headache.’

‘I know the exact potion that will help.’ She looked through the many bottles of various sizes in her medicine cabinet. She pulled one out.

‘Here we are.’ She poured out some into a small cup and handed it to me. ‘This should make you feel better.’

I drank the potion.

‘Have an early night Rebecca, and try not to push yourself too hard. Otherwise you will end back in here, and as much as I liked you as a patient I could do without you being here.’

‘I will, thanks.’

‘Come and see me if you have any other problems.’

I smiled and left. Feeling better I walked to the common room. I said the password and am let in. I found it full of fellow Gryffindors. Some of whom were chatting, some playing card games but most were doing homework or about to start.

‘Hey, Rebecca.’ It was Ginny.

I sat down besides her.

‘You look better.’

‘Thanks, one of Madame Pomfrey’s magical potions.’ I looked at what she was writing.

‘It’s my Divination homework.’ She explained.

I let her get on with it and sat back in the chair.

Hermione looked up from her work, ‘don’t you have any homework, Rebecca?’

‘Not today, no. I shall probably have loads tomorrow.’

I sat there quietly for another half an hour and find myself yawning. I got up.

‘I think I may go to bed actually, it has been a long day.’ Everyone wished me a goodnight and I headed upstairs.

My first week at Hogwarts seemed to fly by. By Friday evening I felt mentally exhausted but pleased with my progress. I had achieved so much this week. The time that I was able to maintain my invisibility had reached forty-five minutes and I could now initiate the invisibility at the same time as making the connection but was having problems when Professor Chimney would start to distract me. He had reassured me that I would get this in time and I should have a restful weekend. I had protested that the other students will get suspicious that I kept not having any homework. So he lent me some books on other types of magic and told me to read them if I really wanted. Ginny and I were in the dormitory getting ready for bed.

‘Rebecca, I am so pleased that you came to Hogwarts. I had always felt like a bit of a spare wheel when hanging around with Harry, Ron and Hermione, it is so lovely to have someone in my year. I wish though you had lessons with me though.’

'You'd get bored of me if you were around me all the time,' I said smiling.

'True,' she said laughing. I threw my pillow at her. A pillow fight followed.

'Ok, Ok, I give up,' I said and collapsed on my bed. 'You can tell you have six brothers.'

'Well, I am going to bed victorious,' Ginny said and headed to the bathroom.

I looked in one of my drawers and realised that I had run out of the sleeping draught that Madame Pomfrey had given me. Well, I thought to myself, I should be fine tonight and I shall get some more tomorrow. I didn't really want to become dependent on it anyway. After I had taken my turn in the bathroom I got into bed and fell asleep.

I was back there. My dad was in our house. I remembered feeling pleased to see him as it had been almost a year since he had last been home. I practically ran downstairs and into the lounge. Almost immediately I sensed something was wrong. I looked at my Mum who was cowering on the sofa, there seemed to be a bruise forming on her cheek.

'Mum? What's happened?'

She didn't answer. I turned to my Dad for an explanation. He turned to me.

'Oh Rebecca dear so nice of you to join us.'

'What's going on?' I asked.

'QUIET,' he shouted and pointed what looks like a stick at me.

'Tom, don't hurt her, please,' my Mum pleaded with him.

'For the last time, don't call me by that name.'

'I'm sorry.' My Mum whispered. I noticed that there were tears falling down her face. I sat down beside her and took one of her hands, she was shaking violently. She turned to me, 'oh Becs, I am so sorry.'

'Sorry for what? I don't understand,' I felt someone slap me around my face.

'DID I TELL YOU TO SPEAK?' I put my hands to my stinging cheek and looked up at my Dad who had hit me.

I shook my head.

'I didn't think so. Now back to business,' he pointed his stick at Mum. I screamed.

'What are you doing? Please don't hurt her.'

'SHUT UP,' he said something under his breath which I couldn't hear and a green light emerged from the stick. My Mum screamed with pain.

'What have you done? Mum, please wake up.' I felt tears run down my face as I realised that she was dead. 'No, no, no.' I screamed.

'Rebecca? Wake up.' I felt someone shake my shoulders. My heart was racing.

'It's me Ginny. You were having a nightmare. You were screaming.' I sat up and saw the other girls in our dormitory staring at me.

'Sorry,' I managed to say.

'Are you ok?'

'Yes, I think I may go and sit downstairs for a bit, let you all get back to sleep.'

'Do you want to talk about it?'

I shook my head and walked out of the room and downstairs to the common room. It was empty. I sat down in one of the chairs and pulled up my knees to my chin and rested my head in my arms. I let

the tears come that had been threatening since I had woken up from my nightmare. After a few minutes I took a deep breath.

‘Rebecca?’

I looked up, it was Harry. He handed me a tissue.

‘I didn’t hear you come in.’

‘Well, I sensed that you just wanted to be left alone for a minute.’

‘Thanks,’ I said.

‘What happened to make you so upset?’

‘I had a nightmare, it was horrible. I woke up all the others so I came down here.’

‘Do you want to talk about it?’

I looked down, ‘no, not really.’

There were a few minutes of silence.

‘Why are you awake, anyway?’ I asked quietly.

‘I had a bad dream as well.’

‘Oh dear,’ I said and thinking about it asked, ‘do you want to talk about it?’

Harry shook his head.

We sat quietly.

‘It makes you scared to go back to sleep doesn’t it?’ Harry asked.

‘Yes, just in case you have another one.’

After another ten minutes, Harry got up, ‘well I think I shall go back to bed. Will you be ok?’

‘Yes,’ I said and got up as well. I had managed to stop shaking and was feeling very sleepy. ‘I think I will too. Hope you don’t have any more nightmares.’

‘You too.’ Harry replied and we made our way back to our respective dormitories.

A First Taste of Quiddich

It was early on Saturday morning, when I woke up. The other girls in the dormitory were still asleep so I got up quietly, had a quick shower and put on jeans and a hooded sweatshirt. I left a note for Ginny saying that I would see her at breakfast. I left quietly and decided to go for a walk before breakfast and so grabbed my coat. It was quite sunny as I headed down towards the lake but December had definitely arrived. I wrapped my coat around me closely.

I thought about the last month, it had really gone quickly. I had been so busy with my lessons and making firm friends with my fellow Gryffindors especially with Ginny but also with Harry, Ron and Hermione. I was really scared at first that they would find out who I was and held back a bit but I came to the conclusion that I should just enjoy it while I could and try and not think about what would happen when they did find out. I knew that they would find out, I was living on borrowed time, but I had to admit I was enjoying it.

There were times when how much of a muggle I was really hit me. I was constantly amazed by the others' stories of what they had learnt in their lessons. This was all so strange to me and I wondered if I would ever get used to it.

Ginny had asked me about my plans for the Christmas holidays which were starting next week. She did invite me to go to their house for Christmas as Harry was spending the whole of the holidays with them and Hermione for some of them. However, I had declined her offer many times. I didn't want to be any trouble and was also dreading my first Christmas without my Mum and part of me wanted to spend it on my own. I walked around the lake; the ground was crispy under my feet with the thick frost. I looked at my watch and decided that it was probably time for breakfast, my stomach was rumbling slightly as well. I walked slowly back up to the Great Hall. There were only a few students up and no sign of Ginny, Harry, Hermione and Ron. I took off my coat and scarf and sat down at our usual space. I helped myself to some warming porridge and a glass of milk.

‘Hello, Rebecca, you are up early.’ It was Hermione, she sat opposite me.

‘I know, I have already walked outside the grounds for a bit as well.’

Hermione helped herself to breakfast and looked at the book she had brought down.

I had nearly finished my second helping of porridge when Harry, Ron and Ginny arrived. Their heads were together as they clearly were discussing something. They sat down still engrossed in their conversation.

‘Hermione, what are they talking about?’

Hermione looked up, and sighed at the sight of the three of them, ‘oh probably Quidditch. It’s Gryffindor against Slytherin today. All three of them are on the Gryffindor team and Harry is the captain.’

‘Quidditch? What the hell is Quidditch?’

‘Ron,’ Hermione said. ‘Rebecca, wants to know what Quidditch is.’

Harry, Ron and Ginny looked at me in surprise.

‘You don’t know what Quidditch is?’ Ron said in surprise.

I shook my head.

‘And you call yourself a witch. Where have you been the last month? We must have mentioned Quidditch before.’ Ron continued.

‘No, I don’t remember hearing it before. Well maybe I did but I may have thought it was just another lesson.’

‘A lesson? Heavens no, Quidditch is like the best sport ever.’

‘Oh, so it’s a sport.’

‘Yes, with broomsticks. You will see later as you are going to come to the match aren’t you?’ Ron asked.

‘Yes, I am very curious.’

‘Ron, she may want some of the rules explained to her, Quidditch is a bit confusing when you first experience it.’ Harry said, ‘especially when you haven’t grown up with it like you and Ginny.’

‘Fair enough, there are two teams with seven players on each. The players are a Keeper, I’m the keeper, three chasers, Ginny is one of these, two beaters and a seeker, that’s Harry. As I said the action is done on broomsticks. There are three balls, the Quaffle which is passed to and fro the chasers who try and score in one of the hoops that are being guarded by the opposing teams keeper.’

‘Oh a bit like netball.’

‘Netball what the hell is that? Hermione?’

Hermione looked up from her book, ‘yes, Rebecca I suppose that part of Quidditch is a bit like netball.’

Ron shook his head and continued, ‘then they are two bludgers which are determined to cause havoc, it is the beaters job to keep them out of the way of the chasers and the seeker. The seeker looks for the last ball which is the Golden Snitch, the seeker that finds the Golden Snitch wins one hundred and fifty points for their team which almost always means that the team wins.’

‘Oh, ok, I think hopefully it will all become clearer when I see it. Is the Gryffindor team good?’

‘Of course it is, with Harry as Captain and he is one of the best seekers the school has ever seen and with Ginny and I also playing Slytherin better watch out.’

‘So, you will probably win then.’

Harry looked more wary, ‘Slytherin are our closest competitors.’

‘Whatever, Harry, that Malfoy isn’t a patch on you as Seeker, despite his brand spanking new broom that he keeps showing of.’

‘Well, we shall see what happens and try our best,’ Ginny said diplomatically.

After breakfast, I walked excitedly over to the Quidditch pitch with Hermione. The others had left for the dressing room. We climbed the spiral staircase up to the Gryffindor stand. I looked around me, even though it was still quite early on a Saturday morning it looked like most of the school had turned out to watch the match. Opposite the Gryffindor stand was the teacher’s stand and I was surprised to see that most of them appeared to be there when I looked in the binoculars that Ginny had lent me for the match. Professor Chimney wasn’t there, however and then I remembered that in my lesson on Friday he had mentioned that he would be away for the weekend.

‘I want you to at some point this weekend to attempt to make a connection with my mind. I want to see how you truth-seek long distance.’ He had said.

‘Hermione? How long before the match starts?’ I asked.

‘Oh probably about ten, fifteen minutes. The team captains have to give their team talks and whatever they do to *mentally prepare* before the big game.’ Hermione replied before returning to her book.

Right, I thought to myself, ten minutes let’s see if I can reach Professor Chimney. I quickly closed my eyes and pictured Professor Chimney standing in front me. I tried and made a connection but it doesn’t work. Something tells me that I have to really have a clear picture of him to work, so I thought of a memory of him telling me something. It became almost like I was back there. I tried and made the connection, it was weak at first but I quickly strengthened it. I made myself invisible and looked through his mind. I wondered where he was, I reached the part of his brain that showed what he was seeing at the moment. He seemed to be in some kind of pub. Rather pleased with myself, I decided to take the opportunity to find out what his first name is, he had told me that it was William, well actually his mind had told me that as it did now but something told me that his first name wasn’t William at all. I searched for a memory with his

parents in it. The memory came across as hazy, but I could just make a woman who seemed to be his mother.

‘Sooty? Dear? Where are you? It’s time for school,’ the woman said.

Sooty? I have to stop myself from laughing – that can’t be his real name surely. Who would name their child Sooty Chimney?

‘But, Mother, I don’t want to go to school, all the other children just make fun of me because of my name.’ I suddenly felt a wave of sympathy for the young Professor Chimney and moved on from the memory. I decided that it was about time that I came clean. I made myself, visible to him.

‘Good morning, sir.’

‘Oh, Rebecca, I wondered when you would appear.’

‘Isn’t it a bit early for drinking?’

‘What? Oh you know where I am then, how long exactly have you been in my head?’

‘Only for a few minutes, Sir, or shall I call you Sooty?’

‘Oh, so you found that out did you?’

‘Yes. It must have been hard going through school with that name, children can be so cruel. I can see why you changed it.’ I said thinking about the memory I had seen.

‘Well, you know I am starting to regret teaching you what I have taught you, as soon you will know all my secrets.’

‘I won’t look any more I promise.’

‘Well done, Rebecca. I am very impressed with what you have done this morning. What are you up to?’

‘I am about to watch my first ever Quidditch match, I suppose I should get back to it really before someone notices how spaced out I must seem.’

‘Quidditch eh? Well enjoy the match, and don’t work too hard this weekend. I know what you are like, you even rival Miss Granger sometimes for time spent in the library but I think you deserve a weekend off.’

‘Ok, I shall see you on Monday. Bye.’ I said and closed the connection. I blinked my eyes and found Hermione was staring strangely at me. When I am truth-seeking I often cannot see what is going on around me and so I must look rather strange to people near by.

‘Rebecca, are you ok? You looked a million miles away.’

‘Oh I was just day dreaming about something.’

‘Well the match is about to start.’

The next hour or so I was gripped by the action that was unfolding in front of me on the pitch. The Gryffindor and the Slytherins were closely matched as it seemed to change quickly who was in the lead.

‘It all depends on which Seeker finds the Snitch first.’ Hermione whispered to me, she seems as interested in the match as I was. Ginny scored another point for the Gryffindors, and our stand cheers. I used my binoculars to see if I could see Harry. I found him above all the action, he was searching for the Snitch. Nearby was the Slytherin seeker. I took a closer look at him. He had light blond hair and is quite pale. Suddenly he dived for something. I followed him with my binoculars and saw that he was chasing a tiny ball that seemed to have wings.

‘Oh, no. Malfoy has spotted the Snitch,’ Hermione said clearly distressed. ‘COME ON HARRY!’ She shouted.

I looked at Harry who was now closely following Malfoy. He was obviously a skilled flier as he overtook Malfoy, reached out with one hand and took the Snitch.

The Gryffindor stand erupted. Hermione turned to me, ‘we have won, we have won.’ I joined in with the applause. Harry and the rest of the Gryffindor team did a lap of honour.

'Come on,' Hermione said and pulled me towards the staircase. I struggled to keep up with her as she ran down the stairs and onto the pitch. Harry spotted her and flew down to meet her and dismounted from his broom.

'Well done, Harry.' She said warmly and gave him a hug.

'What about me?' It was Ron who dismounted next to Harry.

'Well you were amazing too of course, as were you Ginny.' Ginny and Hermione hugged.

'So Rebecca, what did you think?' Ron asked with a smile.

'That was incredible, well done all of you.'

Ginny gave me a hug, 'thanks for coming to watch us.'

'My pleasure, I thought football was exciting but it is nothing compared to Quidditch?'

'Football?'

'A muggle sport,' explained Hermione.

'Oh yes, I have heard some of the other lads talk about it. So you like football then?'

'Yes, but I am quickly becoming a Quidditch fan as well.'

'Good, I could never see the attraction of football, Seems so boring compared to Quidditch.'

'Oh, not always, some matches well they can be real nail biters. You may not have the broom sticks and the three different kinds of balls, but one ball and twenty-two players who are passionate about their sport and their team can be very exciting.'

'Well, personally I think the muggles can keep football, and we shall keep Quidditch.'

'Fair enough,' I said.

‘Ron, we better go and get changed before the party begins in the Common Room without us.’ The boys and Ginny headed off to get changed, Hermione and I walked slowly back to the Common Room.

‘Are you sure you are ok, Rebecca?’

‘What do you mean? I am a little excited after seeing my first Quidditch match so that we, Gryffindors won...’

‘That’s not what I mean. Earlier, before the match you seemed so far away. It was like you weren’t even here.’

‘It was just a daydream.’

‘I have never seen daydreams that have lasted for that long.’

I said nothing as I couldn’t think of anything to say back to her.

‘Ok,’ I said finally. ‘I am not going to lie to you, it wasn’t a daydream. I don’t think I can tell you what I really was doing, it was nothing bad though and I am fine.’

‘Oh, I didn’t think it was anything bad, you smiled to yourself a few times. Is it something to do with your lessons with Professor Chimney?’

‘Yes,’ I said simply.

‘Well, I won’t pester you anymore about it if you are unable to say what happened. I was just curious.’

‘It must have looked rather strange to you.’

She nodded. We reached the Common Room and the party began.

Christmas

I woke up on Christmas morning with a sinking feeling in my stomach. My dormitory was empty as the four girls, including Ginny, had all left for home just over a week ago. I slowly got out of bed and walked to the window. To my surprise it had snowed overnight and was still lightly snowing. I had a long warm shower before getting dressed. I put on my winter boots, my coat and scarf. While the other students were away I had taken to walking around the grounds before breakfast. Breakfast, and in fact all of the meals, during the holidays I had found to be a rather informal affair with the house elves providing whatever those remaining at school wished to have. I arrived at the lake which was probably my favourite place in the grounds of the school. The lake seemed to be slightly frozen. I loved the snow. We didn't get much of it back home, as even when it did snow it never stayed around for long. Something to do with the pollution and the warmth of London, I vaguely remember my Geography teacher telling me once.

The school seemed so quiet without the majority of the students, and I was often at a loss of what to do with myself. I had suggested to Professor Chimney that we could continue our lessons, but he refused, saying I had worked so hard this year that I deserved a break and I should enjoy myself. But I needed something to distract me from this time of year so I spent a lot of time in the library reading anything and everything. It didn't matter as long as I didn't think about what my Christmas was like last year.

Here, though by the lake, I didn't have any distractions, so despite my attempts not to, I remembered last Christmas with my Mum. Mum always tried to make Christmases special for me. She could never buy big presents but would instead hide small ones around the house and give me clues to find them. The hunts must have taken her ages to set up and they got harder each year. It would sometimes take me from breakfast to dinner time to find them. Dinner was always roast turkey with all the trimmings. I remember saying last year that she shouldn't bother with it all as it would probably be only me and her and I didn't mind what I had but she insisted on working really hard on the meal.

When Professor Dumbledore originally told me about my father I remember questioning him saying that he had been at Christmases and stuff but now when I thought about all the Christmases I had spent with my Mum I could no longer picture him being there. It was always just me and Mum. When we had stuffed ourselves with dinner, I would do the washing up and have to practically ban her from the kitchen and make her put her feet up. We would then watch some films on the telly or play some board games.

I wiped away a tear, and thought to myself how strange it was that I hadn't even realised I was crying. I hadn't really cried much since she had died. I supposed I had just tried to pretend that it hadn't happened or just pushed it to one side. I really missed her. I felt a dull ache whenever I thought about her. I sat down by the lake despite the thick snow that was under me and let the tears come.

After, a few minutes, I calmed myself down and told myself that the last thing my Mum would want me to do would be crying over her on Christmas Day, she had always tried so hard to make my Christmases special. I pulled out a tissue from my coat pocket and wiped my eyes.

'Feeling better?' A voice said behind me, I turned around to see Professor Chimney looking at me.

'Yes, how long have you been standing there?'

'Long enough, Rebecca. I sensed though that it was more important for you to just let you let it all out.'

'Thank you,' I said and he helped me to stand up.

'Mind you, I don't think sitting on the snow, was one of your best ideas. You must be freezing.'

I nodded, as I suddenly became aware of just how cold and wet I felt. Professor Chimney pulled out his wand and said a spell. To my surprise, I didn't feel cold any more and felt completely dry. 'What was that?' I asked.

‘Oh just a simple drying spell. Now, let’s get you inside for breakfast. Professor Dumbledore sent me out here to look for you.’

‘Oh sorry,’ I said and we quickly walked up to the Great Hall. I took off my coat and hung it on one of the hooks outside the big doors. We entered the Great Hall.

‘Happy Christmas,’ Professor Dumbledore said.

The Hall had been rearranged into one long table, the teachers were sitting amongst the twenty or so other pupils that had remained at Hogwarts over the holidays.

‘I thought, given the day we would all eat together.’

I smiled and sat down next to Professor McGonagall, who turned to me when everyone else is busy eating.

‘How are you dear? Today must be very hard for you.’

‘I am doing ok I think.’

‘Have you opened your presents yet?’

‘Presents?’ I had been so distracted this morning that I had forgotten about the pile of presents that Ginny, Harry, Hermione, and Ron had left for me before leaving. ‘Oh, no I haven’t opened them yet. Mum used to always make me eat my breakfast first.’ I said and take a mouthful of porridge. The house elves seemed to know exactly how I would like it as every bowl was so delicious.

‘Are you enjoying your break from lessons?’ Professor McGonagall asked.

‘Not really,’ I shook my head. ‘I don’t know what to do with myself.’

‘Professor Chimney tells me you are a very hard-worker and a pleasure to teach. It is a shame that I don’t teach you but Professor Chimney seems very pleased with your progress.’

I smiled, 'well I have learnt so much this term. It's amazing really how much my skills have developed.'

'Have you been spending a lot of time in the library?'

'Yes, I don't really know what else to do.'

'Well, the rest of the students will start coming back soon to get ready for the Winter Ball.'

'Oh, yes, I had forgotten about that. Ginny mentioned it before she went home.'

'Well we had a Yule Ball two years ago, during the Triwizard tournament and since then the students have been pestering us to have another one. We have relented this year as it allows the students to think about something else other than their schoolwork and You-Know-Who.'

I looked away when she said the last part.

'Oh, I am sorry dear, I wasn't thinking.'

'It's ok.'

'It is just I often forget that you are his daughter,' she said whispering so no one else could hear. 'You are nothing like him. You must take after your mother.'

I concentrated hard on my porridge.

Professor McGonagall quickly changed the subject, 'are you planning on going to the Yule Ball?'

'I suppose so I hadn't really thought about it. To be honest I was just concentrating on getting through Christmas.'

'It was a good evening last time. I think the majority of the students had a great time.'

After breakfast, I excused myself and walked up to my dormitory. I sat down on my bed and looked at my presents. I opened my presents one by one. I got jewellery and a small teddy from Ginny, a book about magic from Hermione and an idiot's guide to Quidditch from Ron. Harry's present was a surprise; it was a beautiful silver necklace with a R on it. I put it on. I wondered if they had opened my presents which had turned out to be pretty much the same as they had given me. I had given Ginny some jewellery and perfume, Ron a book about muggle sports and Hermione a book that she had mentioned she would like. I had struggled over what to give Harry but came across a dream catcher which promised to keep bad dreams at bay and so had brought that.

The rest of Christmas Day was lovely. The dinner was very traditional with all the trimmings and then Professor Dumbledore had made us all play games. At first they were magic games, but I showed them how to play some muggle games, pass the parcel was a big success as was hide and seek though there was some cheating with people using spells to make themselves invisible. As I laid in bed that night I thought to myself that it really wasn't as bad as I thought it would be, it had been a good day. I fell asleep with a smile on my face.

A few days later I was sitting by the fire in the Common Room engrossed in a book that I had borrowed from the library.

'Hey, Rebecca.'

'Ginny! What are you doing here? I thought you weren't coming back for a few more days.' I said giving the other girl a hug.

'Well, since you refused point blank to come to ours for Christmas I thought the least I could do is come back a few days early and save you from the library where you no doubt have been spending all your time.'

I looked away slightly embarrassed.

'I knew it!' Ginny said laughing. 'Well, help me upstairs with my things will you?'

‘Sure’, I said and picked up one of her bags. Once inside the dormitory she threw everything on her bed.

‘So how was your Christmas?’ She asked.

‘It was good, actually better than I thought it would be.’

‘You still should have come to ours, we missed you.’

I smiled at her, ‘thanks for the presents Ginny, they are lovely.’

‘Don’t you think it’s funny that we brought each other practically the same thing?’

‘I know. Oh it’s so good that you are back. I swear one more day and I would have gone insane trying to think of things to do.’

‘You could have just rested.’

‘I tried that but I got bored really quickly.’

‘Trust you. Is that a new necklace that you are wearing?’

I reached up to my neck, ‘yes. Harry gave it to me for Christmas, lovely isn’t it?’

‘Yes, it is.’

Ginny and I spent the last week of the holidays relaxing. I wasn’t allowed near the library or pick up any book that was school related. The date for the Winter Ball had been set for the Saturday before Spring Term started. That weekend was a Hogsmeade weekend. I had missed the other Hogsmeade weekends. The Christmas presents I had purchased had been ordered from a catalogue which Professor Chimney had lent me. I had had to think of an excuse for why I had never been to a wizardry town and so said that Mum as a muggle had sometimes found it hard to accept that I was a witch. Also I had said that my old wizardry school had been too far from a town to allow visits. So Ginny was determined that I would go, she dragged me to see Professor McGonagall early on Saturday morning.

‘Rebecca would really like to see Hogsmeade, she has never been to a wizardry town.’

Ginny said earnestly. Professor McGonagall looked at me for confirmation.

‘I would really like to go, I need to get a dress for tonight.’

‘Well, technically you need parental permission.’ Professor McGonagall looked serious.

I looked down.

‘But in your case that is unachievable so I will accept this slip signed by a guardian.’ She said smiling and handed me a piece of paper.

‘A guardian?’ I asked.

‘Yes, perhaps Professor Chimney will sign the form for you. I think he mentioned something about going to your classroom to look over something.’

I took the form, ‘ok, thanks. I shall, hopefully, be back with this signed in a few minutes.’

Ginny and I left Professor McGonagall’s office. I turned to Ginny,

‘Ok, can you go and get my coat and bag? I shall go and find Professor Chimney and meet you back in the Great Hall. Is that ok?’

‘Yes,’ Ginny said excitedly.

We went our separate ways. I walked quickly to the classroom where I had my lessons with Professor Chimney. I knocked softly on the door. I heard a faint ‘Come in’ so I opened the door.

Professor Chimney looked up from his desk.

‘Good Morning, Rebecca.’

‘Morning.’

‘What do you have here?’ He asked looking at the piece of paper in my hand. I handed it over to him.

‘Professor McGonagall suggested that I could ask you if you could sign this so I can go to Hogsmeade. You are meant to have parental permission but obviously that is a little tricky for me given that my Mum is dead and my Dad, well enough said really. So Professor McGonagall suggested that you could sign it as my guardian, you don’t have to really. Though if you don’t I will have to find someone else, and I can’t really think of anyone else. And if I don’t get this form signed then I won’t be able to go to Hogsmeade, and I did really want to go as I have never been to a wizardry town before and I also need to buy a dress for this evening. I haven’t really got anything else to wear so basically if you don’t sign this form then I won’t be able to go to the Ball. No pressure though as I don’t actually have a date so it really wouldn’t be the worse thing in the world if I was unable to go. Mind you thinking about it Professor Dumbledore did say that it could be dangerous if I left the school grounds but Hogsmeade isn’t that far away is it? Well Professor McGonagall didn’t seem to think it was a problem otherwise I am sure that she wouldn’t have got my hopes by giving me this form which I am really hoping you will sign.’ I said nervously pacing the room.

‘Rebecca, calm down,’ Professor Chimney interrupted. ‘Personally, I don’t think it is dangerous for you to visit Hogsmeade. Like you said it is near to the school and besides I think Professor Dumbledore would be more concerned if you were planning on returning to the Muggle world, you should be fine. You are also much stronger then when you first arrived here.’

I sighed in relief as Professor Chimney continued, ‘had you thought that maybe the reason why you haven’t been asked by anyone to go to the Ball is because you wouldn’t let them get a word in? Here you go.’

He handed me back the form. I looked down and saw that he had signed it. Overwhelmed I hugged him.

‘Thanks,’ I said and let go of him.

‘Are you always this scary when you want something?’ Professor Chimney said smiling broadly.

I smiled back, ‘Probably. Seriously though thank you. I better get going now; Ginny will be waiting for me.’ I headed towards the door.

‘Hold on a minute Rebecca. How do you intend paying for your dress and anything else that you no doubt will be tempted to buy?’

‘Oh,’ I said crestfallen. ‘I hadn’t thought about that, I don’t have any wizardry money.’

Professor Chimney pulled out a card, ‘well hand this over when you make your purchases and I will pay for you.’

‘I can’t let you do that.’

‘Yes, you can. Rebecca you have worked so hard this term. Let me do this as a thank you. Don’t even think of refusing, I won’t take no for an answer.’

I paused, not knowing really what to say or do. Professor Chimney reached over and put the card in the pocket of my jumper. He nodded at me.

‘Ok, well if you insist.’

‘I do.’

I turned to the door.

‘Have a good time Rebecca, you really deserve it. Don’t worry about how much you spend.’

I smiled and walked out of the door. I walked quickly to the Great Hall via Professor McGonagall’s office to hand in the form. Ginny was waiting for me at the entrance of the Great Hall with Harry, Ron, and Hermione.

‘Oh, here she is, finally.’ Ginny said.

'Sorry. It's good to see you all.' I said turning to Ron, Hermione and Harry.

'Well, you will have a chance to catch up later; we need to go now otherwise by the time we get to Hogsmeade the shops will be closed.'

'Ginny, stop exaggerating.' Ron said laughing.

Ginny took my arm and we walked in front of Harry, Ron and Hermione. We started walking in the direction of Hogsmeade.

'Neville asked me to go to the Ball with him.' Ginny said beaming

'Oh that's brilliant Ginny.' I said and smiled back at her.

'All we need to do now is get someone to ask you.'

I, a little shocked, replied, 'no, we don't. I don't need anyone to ask me to go to the Ball; I can go on my own.'

'Well, we will see.'

Harry, Hermione and Ron caught up with us.

'So, Rebecca, how was your Christmas?' Harry asked.

'It was good actually, thanks for all your presents.'

Harry, Ron and Hermione all thanked me for their presents. We spent the rest of the walk into Hogsmeade exchanging Christmas stories.

When we reached Hogsmeade, I looked around in wonder. It looked exactly like how I imagined a small Victorian town would look like.

'Right,' Ginny said taking control. We all smiled and turned to her. 'Hermione and Rebecca you come with me. We shall get choosing our dresses out of the way first. Boys go and entertain yourselves. We shall meet up for lunch at the Three Broomsticks at about 12. Ok?'

We all nodded and the boys left us. We started to walk to the Deidre's Dazzling Dresswear shop.

‘Hermione, I am so pleased that this time round my brother got his act together and asked you to the Ball before anyone else did.’

‘I know.’ Hermione said smiling.

‘You are going with Ron? Oh that’s brilliant.’

‘Last time there was a Ball, Ron only asked Hermione as a last resort and Hermione had already been asked.’

‘So, do you have anyone to go with?’ Hermione asked me.

I rolled my eyes, ‘no.’

‘Oh, well there is time yet.’ Hermione replied winking at Ginny.

We entered the shop and were greeted by a tall, thin woman who was wearing a gold ball dress.

‘Hello dears, are you also Hogwarts students looking for dresses for tonight’s ball?’

‘Yes,’ I said answering for all of us.

We spend the next hour or so trying on so many different dresses that I lose count. Finally, we all decided on a dress and matching shoes. Hermione’s dress is a sky blue, Ginny’s a light lilac and mine is a light pink. The woman, Deidre, wrapped up our dresses and we walked out each with a brightly coloured bag in one hand. It felt cold after being so long inside. I pulled on my gloves and wrapped my scarf around my neck. I looked at my watch, and said

‘Five to twelve, perfect.’

Ginny and Hermione led the way to The Three Broomsticks. We passed many Hogwarts’ students, some of whom are also carrying bags from Deidre’s Dazzling Dresswear. The inside of The Three Broomsticks was bustling but a lot warmer then outside. Harry and Ron had managed to get us a table. We sat down gratefully, I realised how tiring trying on dresses actually was when I sit down.

‘So can we have a look?’ Ron asked and reached for Hermione’s bag.

‘No, you shall have to wait until tonight.’ Hermione said smiling.

A waitress walked over to our table and took our food orders. We all ordered the Soup of the Day. The conversation over dinner was cheerful and I realised how much I had missed being around Hermione, Ron, Harry and Ginny while they were away from Hogwarts. They had been so welcoming and accepted me into their group with no questions asked. The food was delicious and very satisfying. Ginny looked at the clock on the wall,

‘Look at the time, we better get going. We still have to show Rebecca the rest of Hogsmeade.’

And show me they did. I saw everything even the Shrieking Shack. I paused before making further purchases on Professor Chimney’s card but reminded myself of what he said and end up with more bags.

As we left the last shop I noticed that my shoelace is undone. I bent down to tie it up but I overbalanced and ended up on my bottom. I laughed to myself and tied up my shoes. Harry was the only one who had noticed and helped me up looking concerned.

‘Don’t worry Harry, no bones broken.’ I said and picked up my bags.

Harry smiled at me.

‘Shall we catch up with the others?’

Harry looked thoughtful, ‘not yet, I want to talk to you on your own for a while.’

‘Oh, ok.’

Harry looked a bit nervous as we started following the others, ‘thanks for your Christmas present. It was really thoughtful of you. I haven’t had a bad dream since you gave it to me.’

'I am pleased you like it. Thanks for your present as well, it is beautiful, are you sure you didn't spend too much money on it?' I asked and reached for the necklace.

'No, I didn't.'

We walked for a while in silence.

'Rebecca?'

'Yes?'

'Do you have a date for the Ball?'

'No, I don't.'

'Well, I don't suppose you would like to go with me.'

'You? You mean the famous Harry Potter doesn't have a date?' I replied nervously. Harry looked hurt so I quickly said, 'sorry that came out wrong. I am just surprised that you haven't got a date, you are a lovely guy.'

Harry blushed.

I was realising that when I am nervous I had a tendency to let my mouth run away with itself, 'so lovely indeed that you would probably find it difficult to say no if a certain red-headed girl that we both know asked you to ask me to go to the Ball. Well I don't want you to feel like you have to ask me to go; I am perfectly fine about going on my own.'

Harry interrupted me, 'I am sure you would be fine going on your own, you seem a very independent person. Ginny didn't make me ask you, I know it is late notice but I have been trying to pluck up the courage to ask you ever since the Ball was announced. I just thought we could have fun together and maybe get to know each other a little better.' He looked down at the floor.

Feeling bad, I touched his arm gently and said 'I'm sorry Harry, for judging you so if the offer is still there I would love to go to the Ball

with you.' I ignored the little voice in my head that is saying that I really shouldn't be going with Harry as my Dad killed his parents. And if he knew that about me he wouldn't be here asking me to go.

Harry smiled.

'So Harry, have you finally asked her?' Ron asked smiling. They had waited for us to catch up.

'Yes, and she said yes.'

Ginny hugged me and whispered, 'I knew Harry liked you.' I felt myself blush and Ginny grabbed my arm. 'I think Hermione should come to our dormitory when we get back and then we can get dressed together.'

Hermione and I nodded in agreement and we all headed back to Hogwarts.

It was inevitable

It didn't take us as long to get ready for the Ball as I thought it would do. The wonders of magic I suppose. Hermione used her wand to conjure a spell on her hair that transformed it from being wavy with a tendency to frizz (her own words) to being glossy ringlets. Ginny's hair was now completely straight after a straightening hair spell.

'Right, your turn,' Ginny said after being satisfied with her reflection in the mirror turns to me. 'Now, do you want straight hair or curly hair? Rebecca?'

I realised that I am slightly overwhelmed by magic once again and had probably been staring at Ginny and Hermione looking slightly shocked.

'Either way it is a pretty easy spell,' Hermione said.

Ginny nodded in agreement, there was a slightly awkward silence until I realised that they were expecting me to pull out my wand and perform one of the spells they had just been successful in conjuring. My heart seemed to skip a beat as I thought desperately of a way to get myself of this situation.

'Um, maybe it would be better if one of you did it. I have never been very good at spells directed at me. I would probably end up with green and pink hair if I did it myself.'

Hermione looked at me curiously.

'Please, if you don't mind.'

Ginny, less suspicious of me, took out her wand and said, 'well personally I think your hair would look lovely straight.'

In the seconds before she says the spell, I realise that I am feeling really nervous. I tell myself to stop being silly but then realised that the last time a wand was pointed at my head it was by my Dad. Ginny paused,

'Are you ok, Rebecca? You look a bit pale.'

‘Sorry, I was miles away then.’ I said smiling.

Ginny conjured the spell, which made my head feel pleasantly tingly and straightened out all the natural waves in my long hair. I looked at myself in the mirror, my hair looked lovely.

‘Thanks, Ginny. It looks lovely. This would have taken ages with a pair of straighteners.’

Ginny looked confused but Hermione explained, ‘straighteners are what Muggles used to make their hair straight. A bit like a hair dryer.’

Ginny nodded. We took it in turns in the bathroom to carefully put on our dresses being careful not to mess up our hair. I was last and after one last look at myself in the mirror – I could hardly believe that it was me in the reflection I returned to the dormitory.

‘Well, don’t we all look lovely?’ Ginny said. We walked down to the Common Room where Neville, Ron and Harry were sitting waiting for us. They all looked slightly uncomfortable in their dress robes.

‘Finally!’ Ron said. ‘Any longer and we would have had to send out a search party.’

‘Ron, honestly.’ Hermione said and walked over to him and carefully straightened his robes. They walked out the portrait hole arm in arm. Neville and Ginny followed them. I felt Harry take my arm gently. My heart fluttered slightly which alarmed me slightly. As we walked out of the portrait hole, Harry said,

‘You look really pretty tonight Rebecca. No, not pretty, beautiful. You look beautiful.’

I felt myself blush, ‘thanks, Harry. You look rather handsome yourself.’ This time Harry blushed.

The Great Hall looked amazing. I looked around me at all the other pupils who looked lovely in their dresses and dress robes. The tables had been pushed to the sides to allow for a dance floor. We followed the others to one of the tables which contained a large buffet. I found myself unable to eat that much as I feel so excited. The last time I

had been to something like this was the ball that my school had held to celebrate us finishing our GSCES. Lianne, Jessica and I had gone as a group as none of us had been asked to go with anyone. We had a really good night. I was forced back in to the present when I saw Professor Chimney walk towards me. I walked over to meet him.

‘You look lovely, Rebecca, what a lovely dress. How was Hogsmeade?’

‘Amazing, I hope you don’t mind but spent quite a lot of money.’ I said and reached into my bag for the card and return it to him.

‘As long as you had fun.’

‘I did.’

‘Well enjoy yourself tonight.’

I caught Harry looking at me as I walked back to the group, when he noticed he looked away and seemed embarrassed.

‘Rebecca? What’s Professor Chimney like?’ Ginny asked.

‘Lovely, actually. He stops me from working too hard. I have learnt so much from him this term.’

‘What kind of things?’ Hermione asked.

I bit my lip nervously. Harry rescued me,

‘Now, Hermione, don’t start a conversation about school work. Not on one of our last nights of freedom.’ He turned to me, ‘Rebecca would you like to dance?’

I nodded and he took my hand. The band was playing a slow song so when we reached the dance floor Harry gently placed his hands on my waist which made my heart flutter again. I placed my hands on his shoulders.

‘Pleased you came?’ Harry asks.

‘Yes,’ I said and smiled at him. Thinking, I continued, ‘thanks for asking me Harry. Actually, thanks for everything really. It could have been really difficult fitting into a new school part way through a year and but you and the others have made it really easy for me.’

Harry whispered, ‘my pleasure.’

My heart seemed to skip a beat again and I made a note to myself that maybe I should go and see Madame Pomfrey in the morning as this just wasn’t normal. A more rational explanation entered my head but I pushed it to one side. I was not developing those kinds of feelings for Harry, I wasn’t, I couldn’t.

We danced for a few more songs. Harry whispered in my ear again,

‘Do you want to get some fresh air?’

I nodded and removed my hands from his shoulders. He took one of them and held it. He lead me outside. The night was clear but a bit chilly so Harry removed the jacket of his dress robes and gently placed it over my shoulders, he took my hand again. We walked for a bit in a comfortable silence. I tried to ignore the little voice in my head that is screaming to me to get back inside with everyone else as I didn’t want to do that. Right now I felt really happy. I looked up and saw we were by the lake. I smiled to myself. Harry turned to face me.

‘This has to be my favourite place in the whole school. It is so peaceful.’

I felt my mouth begin to dry as Harry didn’t say anything but continued to look straight into my eyes. For a moment I was slightly hypnotised by his eyes. I, reluctantly, forced myself to look at the lake. I swallowed and tried and stop my heart from feeling like it was going to have a heart attack.

‘The lake looks different by moonlight don’t you think? It looks so beautiful tonight.’

Harry didn’t follow my gaze to the lake and instead whispered, ‘not as beautiful as you.’

Alarmed I stepped away from him.

‘Rebecca? What’s wrong?’

I tried to calm down my breathing. Harry placed his hands on my shoulders. I looked up at him, he looked concerned.

‘We can’t do this Harry.’ I managed to say. Harry looked confused.

‘Do what?’ He asked.

I turned away from him, ‘you know what I mean.’

I heard Harry sigh. He walked in front of me. He gently lifted my head to look at him.

‘Why?’

‘Because...’ I struggled to find the words. The little voice inside my head was saying because my Dad killed your parents and left you with that scar.

‘Yes?’

‘Because...’ Come on Rebecca think of something.

‘Don’t tell me you weren’t feeling what I was feeling on the dance floor. There is a connection between us Rebecca, a spark. I have never felt this way about someone as I do about you. I really like you.’

‘Don’t do this Harry.’ I felt tears well up in my eyes, I blinked them away.

‘All I want to do, Rebecca, is kiss you. Would that be so terrible?’ I found myself unable to say anything. Harry looked hurt and confused and started to walk away from me.

‘Harry wait,’ I called out and touched his arm. Harry gently touched my face, lifted up my chin and placed his lips on mine. It felt like fireworks had gone off inside me. I lost myself in the kiss. For a moment it was just Harry and I alone in the world, nothing else

mattered. We pulled away from each other. What has just happened hit me and I stepped away like I had been punched in the stomach.

‘See, it wasn’t that terrible was it?’

I shook my head and Harry moved closer to me and we kissed again. The concerns that had been swimming around my head moments before disappeared as I was consumed in the intensity of the kiss. Harry pulled away, I took a deep breath and realised that my hands were shaking. Right, I think to myself you have to do something, this isn’t fair on Harry, you know he wouldn’t be doing this if he really knew who you were. I got ready to say something when Harry wrapped his arms around me, I found myself doing the same. I heard the voice in my head screaming at me to stop but before I know it we were kissing again. Harry whispered in my ear,

‘This feels so right.’ We kissed again despite that my head is telling me that I shouldn’t be doing this, but Harry was right despite everything it did feel right. For the first time since coming to Hogwarts, I felt like I truly belonged.

‘Well, well, well. What do we have here?’

I quickly came to my senses and pulled away from Harry and turned to where the voice was coming from. It was Draco Malfoy, he was alone and staring at us.

‘Malfoy, do you mind? I was in the middle of something.’ He took one of my hands and pulled me towards him. I froze though as I felt a sinking feeling in my stomach.

‘I can see that Potter, I’m not as stupid as you. I’m just surprised that’s all, with her being who she is.’ Draco turned to me and it is then that I realised that he knew, he knew who I was. I stepped away from Harry.

‘What’s that supposed to mean, Malfoy?’ Harry asked clearly annoyed.

Draco and I stared at each other.

'Are you jealous is that it? I am here kissing one of the most beautiful girls in the school and here you are all alone.'

'Well maybe you wouldn't see her as being so beautiful if you knew who she really was.' Draco replied.

I found my voice, 'please Draco, don't.'

'Don't what?' Harry was looking at me, the confusion he was feeling was written all over his face. I couldn't reply though so Draco does it for me,

'She doesn't want me to tell you the truth about her, but despite our history I think you deserve to know.'

I felt a tear trickle down my face.

'Know, what? What is it Rebecca?'

I shook my head, deep down I knew that I should tell him but I couldn't find the words. Instead,

'She's Voldemort's daughter.' Draco said simply.

Harry laughed, 'is this some kind of joke, Malfoy? He started towards him.

'No it isn't. Miss Rebecca Jones, your date for the evening is none other but Voldemort's daughter. Tell him Rebecca.'

Harry turned to me, I backed away from him. 'Rebecca? Tell me this isn't true. Please.' He grabbed my shoulders and shook me. I looked down at the floor. 'Rebecca? TELL ME HE IS LYING.'

Out of the corner of my eye I noticed Draco walking away with a smirk on his face.

'I can't,' I whispered. I was unprepared for the slap around the face and I was sent crashing down to the floor. I reached out and touched my cheek which was stinging but the pain was nothing compared to

what I was feeling inside. I looked up at Harry, he looked so angry that I quickly got to my feet.

‘Please, let me explain.’

‘EXPLAIN? WHAT IS THERE TO EXPLAIN? ARE YOU VOLDEMORT’S DAUGHTER?’

I nodded. I felt tears running down my face.

‘WHY ARE YOU CRYING? WHAT RIGHT HAVE YOU GOT TO BE CRYING?’ Harry shouted in my face.

‘I’m so sorry Harry. The last thing I wanted to happen was you to find out like this.’

‘LIKE WHAT? AFTER WE HAVE JUST KISSED? WHEN WOULD HAVE BEEN A BETTER TIME THEN?’

I shrugged my shoulders.

‘Oh, I get it. I have been so stupid. I wasn’t meant to find out until you betray me or something to your precious father.’

‘No, it isn’t like that.’

‘THEN WHAT IS IT LIKE? I really liked you, you knew that. Well, at least Malfoy had the decency to let me know. He may be in training to become a death eater but perhaps he has actually done me a favour albeit in his own twisted way. I see you for what you are now. Your father put you here, is that why you are crying? Has your little plan gone wrong?’

‘NO, there is no plan, Harry. I haven’t had contact with my Dad for months now, you have to believe me there is no plan.’

‘Believe you? How can I believe one single word that comes out of your mouth? You have been lying to me, to all of us for all this time.’

‘I had to, Harry, I had to.’

‘Oh I’m sure you did, part of your plan.’

‘No.’

‘STOP LYING!’ Harry hit me again hard and I fell to the floor. I cried out as my head hit a large stone. He grabbed one of my arms roughly and dragged me to my feet. He started pulling me in the direction of the school.

‘Harry, please let go you are hurting me.’ He ignored me and instead gripped tighter, ‘where are we going?’ I asked.

‘The Common Room, the Ball will be over by now.’

I stopped walking.

‘Oh, don’t be scared about telling everyone who you really are, I am sure that they will be really understanding.’ Harry said bitterly and snatched his jacket back.

The Truth is Out

I felt my head pounding as Harry dragged me up the stairs to the Common Room. I tried to stop myself from crying but was unable to stop the flood of tears. My face hurt where I had hit the stone and my arm was throbbing where Harry was holding it. We arrived outside the Common Room. Harry seemed to pause at the sound of laughing that is coming from the room. He let go of my arm and turned away from me. I rubbed my arm. Harry turned back to me, and I realised he was trying really hard not to cry.

‘Harry? I’m so sorry.’ I whispered.

‘How could you do this to me?’

We were interrupted by Ginny and Neville who appeared behind us.

‘Hey you guys,’ Ginny said warmly. She looked at me in horror, I supposed I must have looked a bit of a mess with my hair all over the place, my face was tear-streaked and I expected that a bruise was forming on my face. ‘Rebecca! What’s happened to you?’ She walked towards me but I backed away.

‘Rebecca? What’s happened? Has somebody hurt you?’

‘Oh no there is nothing wrong with Rebecca. She is fine.’ Harry muttered the password under his breath and the door to the Common Room opened. ‘After you, Rebecca.’

I paused, I suppose trying to delay for as long as possible what I knew was going to happen. Harry grabbed my arm again and pulled me into the Common Room.

‘Harry! What are you doing? What’s going on?’ I heard Ginny ask.

The Common Room was full of Gryffindors making the most of the extended time we had been allowed before lights would go out. Harry pushed me to the middle of the Common Room. I tripped over something and ended up on my knees.

‘HARRY!’ Ginny shouted.

There was a deafening silence as all those in the Common Room turned to face Harry and I. Hermione walked over to help me stand up and looked at Harry.

‘DON’T TOUCH HER. DON’T HELP HER.’ Harry shouted. I managed to get to my feet myself which was no easy task as I was shaking. I had given up trying not to cry, it just took up too much energy.

‘HARRY! WHAT IS GOING ON?’ Ginny shouted.

‘ASK HER!’ Harry said pointing his wand at me. ‘TELL THEM.’

I closed my eyes.

‘TELL THEM, TELL THEM WHO YOU ARE.’

‘I’m so sorry...’

‘TELL THEM.’

I bit my lip and looked down at the floor, ‘I’m Voldermort’s daughter.’ I whispered.

There was a loud gasp.

‘See it wasn’t that hard, was it? You should have told us from the beginning, it would have saved us all a lot of bother,’ Harry said. ‘And pain.’

‘Is it true?’ Ginny asked, I forced myself to look at her, she was clearly shocked and a tear ran down her face. I nodded.

‘Please, let me explain.’

‘WE DON’T WANT TO HEAR ANYMORE OF YOUR LIES.’ Harry shouted. Ginny ran in the direction of the dormitory, I tried to follow her but Ron stepped in my way.

‘Don’t you think you have done enough? How could you befriend her when all the time you were related to that... that monster? She still has nightmares from her last encounter with your father.’ Ron pushed me and I fell backwards.

I picked myself up and looked around. Everyone was staring at me, most of them had their wands drawn, 'please, let me explain, you don't understand.'

'Understand? What is there to understand? You have been lying to us, pretending to be someone that you are not.' Harry said pacing the room.

'I had to, I had no choice.'

'No, of course not, had to please your Daddy didn't you? What is he going to think now? You have failed in your little mission.'

'There is no mission.'

'And we are supposed to believe that?' Ron said.

'Rebecca, show me your wand.' Hermione asked. I was surprised by the question.

'My wand?'

'Yes, where is your wand?'

'I... I don't know... it may be in my room.'

'In your room? But every witch or wizard knows that they should carry around their wand at all times.' I looked down at the floor as Hermione continued, 'but then you wouldn't know that would you? Being a muggle?'

I looked at her.

'A muggle? The daughter of Voldemort can't be a muggle. Are you a muggle?' Harry said.

I nodded.

Harry laughed, 'I bet your father was thrilled when he found that out.' I looked away.

'Let's get her,' I heard somebody shout, and everyone encircled me.

‘What on earth is going on in here?’ It was Professor McGonagall. ‘These lights should be out and you should all be in bed. I don’t want to have to take away any points from you.’

I saw a gap in the circle of students and ran to the door. I made it before anyone else realised I had gone. I crashed into someone outside the door to the Common Room. Without seeing who it was I started running down the stairs wanting to put as much distance as I could between the Common Room and myself.

‘Rebecca, where do you think you are going?’

I stopped and looked at where the voice had come from, it was Professor Chimney. I turned back to the stairs and continued to run down them.

‘Rebecca! STOP! Where are you going?’

‘Anywhere,’ I called back.

‘It is late look we can go to the classroom.’

I ignored him and ran to the nearest door to outside. To my surprise, it opened and I ran out into the night.

‘Rebecca, stop!’ Professor Chimney was running behind me. I ran faster but Professor Chimney caught up with me and wrapped his arms around me and made me stop.

‘Let me go!’ I tried to struggle out of his grip but he had me firmly.

‘No.’

‘Please, just let me go.’

‘Go where?’

‘Anywhere, I don’t want to be here anymore.’

‘Where will you go?’

‘I don’t know, ok, anywhere has got to be better then here.’

'You can't leave the school grounds, you know that.'

'Why? Because you have told me that my father could get me? Well, frankly, at this moment in time I don't really care.'

'Rebecca, don't say things like that.' He finally let me go.

'Why not? I am meant to be a truth seeker aren't I? Well how come I can't tell the truth? That is how I feel. They all know now, they all know that I am Voldermort's daughter.'

'We thought that was the case.'

'We?'

'Professor Dumbledore, Professor McGonagall and I saw Harry drag you to the Common Room. Did you tell him?'

'NO! Do you have any idea about how hard it has been lying to all of them? Draco Malfoy told Harry. Harry and I were by the lake, we had been kissing when Draco turned up and decided to tell him.' I collapsed to the floor at this point feeling completely shattered and hid my head in my hands. Professor Chimney took off his jacket and wrapped it round me before gently picking me up. He carried me back inside and down some corridors. I realised he was taking me to the room where we had lessons. He placed me in one of the chairs and sat in the one opposite. He handed me a tissue and I wiped my face.

'I don't really know why I am so upset, I mean I brought this upon myself really.'

'Rebecca, you had no choice over what happened.'

'I should have stayed away from them, but they were so friendly and I felt so alone. I have been so stupid. I always knew deep down that at some point they would find out but... no wonder Harry hates me now... why did I let him kiss me? I should have stopped it, I should have. I have hurt him so much and Ginny...'

'What about you? How are you feeling?'

I looked at him in surprise, 'me?'

'Yes, I am worried about you.'

I found myself unable to reply. A few minutes later I said,

'Isn't it strange how quickly things have changed? This morning I was just like any other Hogwarts' student excited about the prospect of visiting Hogsmeade for the first time and now, well now I am apparently in league with my father set on plotting the downfall of the wizardry world and Harry Potter.'

'Rebecca, they don't understand. They are scared by just the mention of your father's name. I am sure their reaction is just shock. When they have thought about things more deeply I am sure they will be able to look beyond your name, look beyond the fact that you are Voldemort's daughter.'

'I don't agree. They are so loyal to Harry, don't get me wrong, their loyalty is a good thing – you never know when he may need it.'

Professor Chimney made me a cup of hot chocolate and I sat quietly reliving everything that had happened that evening. There was a knock at the door, Professor Chimney opened it. It was Professor McGonagall and Professor Dumbledore. Professor Chimney conjured up two more chairs for them and they all sat down facing me.

'Rebecca, I can not apologise enough, tonight must have been awful for you.' Professor Dumbledore said with compassion in his eyes.

I nodded my head, 'not the best, no.'

'She has been blaming herself.' Professor Chimney said.

'Well, you shouldn't Rebecca. None of this is your fault.' Professor Dumbledore said and gently stroked one of my hands.

I shook my head.

'The question is, Albus, what do we do now?' Professor Chimney asked. 'Surely she can't go back to the Gryfinndor tower?'

'I don't think that would be a good idea. They are rather angry with her. I found Miss Weasley going through her things. I stopped her and had a house elf pack them up. I have placed your trunk in the room just off the hospital wing. It may be better if you stayed there for the time being.' Professor McGonagall said.

I nodded. The three of them discussed everything amongst themselves. They did try and involve me in their conversation but I found myself unable to put exactly how I was feeling into words. Eventually I seemed to zone out of the conversation and thought about everything that had happened. I knew Professor Dumbledore suggested that I should not blame myself but at that present point in time I couldn't really see who else was to blame. I could, I supposed, get angry at Professor Dumbledore for bringing me here but his intentions you couldn't fault. I couldn't escape the truth that I had been brought here in an attempt to save my life. Even in my darkest times, and over the last few months I had had quite a few, things had never been bad enough to wish myself dead. I suppose that was the survival instinct that was a permanent part of the human nature. I had grown as a person since coming to Hogwarts. I had made friends, good friends. I closed my eyes involuntarily. I didn't want to think about how things could have been done differently. What had happened had happened and there was certainly nothing I could do about it now. Yes, their reaction to my true identity had hurt me deeply as I wasn't just Voldemort's daughter but had I really expected a different reaction? Their young lives had been haunted by Voldemort, especially Harry. Although Voldemort had not always been visible he was always in the background, in the back of people's minds or the stuff of nightmares.

'Rebecca? I think it is time for you to go to bed,' Professor Chimney said softly. I got up slowly, handed back Professor Chimney his jacket and walked to the door. Professor Chimney looked like he was planning on coming with me but I said,

'I'll be ok, I would rather be on my own for a while.' Professor Chimney paused and seemed to be thinking about what I have said.

'Very well, I shall come and see you tomorrow.'

I said goodbye to the others and slowly made my way to the hospital wing. As I walked past Madame Pomfrey's office I noticed that the door is open and the light was on.

'Hello Rebecca,' Madame Pomfrey said.

'Hello,' I said sighing. Madame Pomfrey stood up and reached for one of the bottles of potions from her shelves. She measured out a potion into a small cup and passed it to me.

'This is a sleeping potion, I thought you may need it after the night you have had. It is fast acting so wait until you are in bed to take it. You should find everything in your room.'

'Thanks,' I said. 'Night.'

On my way to my room I looked in at the main hospital wing but it is empty. I opened the door to my room. The bed had been made and my pyjamas were at the foot of it. I took them and found my sponge bag in my trunk and headed to the bathroom. I carefully took off my dress and changed into my pyjamas. I tried to concentrate hard on what I was doing and block out everything that has happened. I cleaned my teeth and returned to my room. I laid the dress out on a chair and got into bed. I reached out for the cup and took the potion. As usual it tasted disgusting. I turned off the light and laid down.

The Letter

The first thing I saw when I woke up in the morning was my dress in the chair where I left it. Seeing it brought everything painfully flooding back to me and I closed my eyes. Oh yes, I thought to myself, last night was when my whole world was turned upside down. I opened my eyes and was drawn to the dress again. The sight of it lying there becomes unbearable and I practically jumped out of bed. I grabbed it but realised that I have no idea what to actually do with it so I resorted to placing it at the bottom of my trunk and covered it with the rest of my things. I came across the photo of Mum and I, tears pricked my eyes as I pick it up and sit down on the bed. I placed the photo on the small table by the side of the bed and laid down looking at it. I pulled the covers up and curled up.

I don't know how long I laid there, I was vaguely aware of Madame Pomfrey coming in and placing down a breakfast but I didn't even look up. I laid completely still. I tried to stop thinking but found this impossible so instead focused on thinking about unimportant things such as remembering all the lines from a school play which I had learnt last year. It had been so much fun being involved in it. I remembered how reluctant I had been to audition but Lianne and Jessica had persuaded me to at least try out and to my complete surprise I had ended up with one of the lead roles. Mum had insisted on coming to every single performance and had sat proudly on the front row. Sometimes when I looked out into the audience I saw her mouthing my lines, I suppose she had learnt them off by heart as she had tested me on them so often. I sighed out loud, why did everything always come back to her? I then answered my own question, because she was your mother, she single-handedly brought you up and would have done anything for you.

'Rebecca, dear, I have brought you some lunch. You should really try and eat something, it may make you feel better,' Madame Pomfrey said kindly and replaced my untouched breakfast tray with another tray.

I didn't move. Eating was the absolutely last thing that I wanted to be doing. Madame Pomfrey left the room. I spent the afternoon in the

same position, I supposed I must have fallen asleep at some point as I was woken up to hear some shouts.

‘WHERE IS SHE? I DEMAND TO KNOW WHERE SHE IS’ I recognised the voice as Harry’s. Alarmed I got out of my bed and slowly opened the door, I heard footsteps approaching. My heart raced as I quickly close the door and rammed a chair against it so it couldn’t be opened. I looked around for somewhere to hide and clambered under my bed. My breathing seemed so loud and fast and I tried to steady it whilst at the same time trying to stop shaking. There was a banging on the door.

‘OPEN THE DOOR!’ Harry shouted. ‘I know you are in there, you can’t hide in here forever.’

He sounded so angry and carried on banging on the door.

‘Mr Potter and Mr Weasley I want you both to leave the hospital wing right now.’ It was Madame Pomfrey.

‘All we want to do is to see Rebecca.’ I heard Ron reply.

There was more banging on the door. I covered my ears with my hands and started to sing a song to myself. It was a song that I remembered from my childhood that my mum used to sing to me after a nightmare or when I had been frightened by something. I wiped away the tears that insisted on falling down my face. The banging continued for a while and then stopped. I remained under the bed. After a while I heard,

‘Rebecca? It’s me, Professor Chimney, Mr Potter and Mr Weasley have gone now. Please open the door.’

I found myself unable to move.

‘Ok, if you are anywhere near the door, please step away as I open it.’ Professor Chimney said. There was a pause and then a loud bang as the chair was knocked to the floor as the door opened. ‘Rebecca? Where are you?’ I saw his feet appear at one side of the bed and suddenly his face appeared, ‘oh there you are. Come out sweetie.’ He said softly and reached out for my hand. I took it and he helped

me to come out from under the bed. I sat down on the bed. Professor Chimney picked up the chair and sat opposite me. He stared at me and seemed to expect me to say something. When I don't he looked around the room and his eyes rested on the tray of food. He sighed, 'you need to eat Rebecca.' I looked down at the floor. He continued, 'Madame Pomfrey is very worried about you. You haven't eaten anything today.' I continued to look at the floor which happened to be blue floor tiles. 'I know what happened last night has obviously hurt you deeply but life has got to go on. You cannot hide in your bed forever.' The floor tiles had white specks in it. 'Look at me, Rebecca.' I noticed that one of the tiles is slightly cracked. I feel his hands grab my shoulders and he shook me violently. 'You need to snap out of this.' I flinched away from him and stood up. I moved to the other side of the bed and sat down with my back to him. I folded my legs up and hug them hiding my face. I heard footsteps coming towards me and a hand was placed on my shoulders.

'I am sorry, Rebecca, I shouldn't have done that. I was just frustrated, I want to help you in any way that I can.'

'Well, get me out of here, then,' I whispered.

'You know I can't do that. Besides, I would miss you; you are an incredible person to teach.'

'I know you can't get me out of here, I was just it wishful thinking,' I said a bit louder and decided to pull myself together. I looked up at him. 'Sorry I didn't talk to you straight away and sorry that I haven't eaten today. I just haven't felt like doing anything other then lay in my bed and try and forget everything. But I realise now that what happened has happened and you are right life must go on.'

'I can't even imagine how you must be feeling.' He looked so concerned that I had to say,

'I will be ok, you know.'

'I have no doubt of that. I don't think I have ever met a person like you.' He said smiling as he sat down next to me. I smiled back. 'Now, you aren't going to like what I am going to say but I would like you to

hear me out and bear in mind that I have only got your best interests in mind.'

'Ok,' I said tentatively. 'Hit me with it.'

'I want you to join the other students for breakfast tomorrow.'

I stood up in surprise, 'what did you say?'

'I want you to come to the Great Hall for your meals again, starting with breakfast tomorrow.'

My hands go to my head as I tried to process what he was saying, 'what? Like nothing has happened? You cannot be serious, you...'

'You need to trust me on this one.' Professor Chimney said calmly.

'But...'

'No buts, Rebecca. If you stay in here they will just come looking for you again. We can't guarantee that there will be a teacher or Madame Pomfrey around next time. You need to walk into the Great Hall tomorrow morning showing that you have nothing to hide that you are innocent.'

'Do I get a choice?'

Professor Chimney shook his head, 'not on this one.'

'Oh and I suppose if I don't do it then you will just make me won't you?'

'If I have to, yes.'

I felt my anger bubbling away in me. Professor Chimney had this power over me, with a simple spell he could enter my mind and make me do things. Despite my best efforts and resistance I had not yet been able to fight him off. It hurt me though that he would use this to make me do something that he knew I was really against and didn't want to do. Though thinking about it the whole point of trying to enable me to fight off anyone trying control me was the fear that

Voldemort could and probably would try this and I suppose he wouldn't take any notice of how I felt about whether he was trying to make me do. This whole thing was so frustrating. All I wanted to do was for things to go back to how they were with my Mum. My thoughts were interrupted by a knock on the door.

'Come in,' Professor Chimney answered for me. It was Madame Pomfrey with my dinner on a tray. She placed it down and took the lunch tray. She looked at Professor Chimney with concern. 'Don't worry. I will make sure she eats some dinner.' Seeming more satisfied Madame Pomfrey left closing the door quietly behind her. I walked over to the dinner tray; it was mashed potatoes and sausages. I sat down on the chair with the tray and slowly tried to eat. I supposed I was helped by the fact that deep down I was probably hungry as I had not eaten since last night at the Ball and I managed to eat the whole meal.

'Well done, Rebecca I shall leave you now, try and get an early night tonight and I shall expect to see you tomorrow morning at breakfast.'

He left me alone to my thoughts. My head was spinning, I decided to take his advice and headed for Madame Pomfrey's office for my sleeping potion. I took my empty dinner tray.

'Hello, dear, oh well done for eating all your dinner,' she said noticing the empty tray.

I smiled, 'I think I shall have an early night and so could I have my sleeping potion now, please?'

'Yes, of course, I shall give you the same one as you had last night.' She handed me a small cup.

'Thanks,' I said and walked away. After getting ready for bed I clambered into bed and with a sigh of relief took the potion which would send me into a dreamless, thoughtless sleep.

I woke up early the next morning, I thought about trying to get back to sleep but was reminded about what Professor Chimney wanted me to do this morning. I feel nervous just thinking about it. Part of me

realises that perhaps Professor Chimney may be right, I now have nothing to hide as the whole school knows who I really am. I had been scared yesterday when Harry and Ron had come looking for me but I could understand why they had. I suppose they didn't trust Professor Dumbledore that I was not a threat to Harry or anyone else. After all, I had lied to them about who I was and so could be lying about Voldemort too.

I took a long time in the shower and got dressed slowly. It was the first day back after Christmas and I reflected that if everything hadn't come out then I would probably have been looking forward to the new term with anticipation. Instead I had a sinking feeling in my stomach, similar to the one that I had before every one of my GCSEs exams last summer. I should think of this as an exam that although difficult, it was inevitable and something that had to be done.

When I have finished getting dressed I brushed my long hair and plaited it. I looked at my watch and sighed as there was still nearly an hour before breakfast. I looked around my room looking for something to occupy my mind before I had to walk down to the Great Hall. My eye fell onto my trunk and I spent the next hour tidying it up, I decided to keep everything in the trunk as the room didn't have any drawers or anything, obviously not designed for people to stay there long term. After tidying my trunk I made my bed and made sure everything else was straight in my room and looked through some books. I looked at my watch again and this time I saw that it was nearly time to go down to breakfast. I closed the book that I have been pretending to read. I checked my appearance in the mirror and smoothed out my uniform. With a backward look at my room, I walked slowly out and closed the door softly behind me.

I started to walk in the direction of the Great Hall and really did intend on entering the Hall but seeing some other students I stepped backwards and hid in the shadows. Instead I turned the other way in the direction of the lake. I was nearly at the door which lead outside when I heard a voice,

'Rebecca, the Great Hall is not that way.' My heart sank when I recognised the voice as Professor Chimney's.

'I know, I just need a bit of fresh air,' I replied without turning to face him.

'Well, you can get some fresh air after breakfast. Come on walk with me.'

I stayed where I was. As far as I could see I had two options, make a run for it outside or walk down to breakfast with him. I said my hand reaching involuntarily for the handle of the door as my instinct seemed to be to run.

'Rebecca, come on now,' Professor Chimney said softly. I could hear other people walking around him, other students that are going to breakfast.

I put my hand up to my head, I had no choice. I slowly turned to face him. To my surprise he had his wand out and is pointing it at me and seemed about to say the spell that enabled him to enter my mind.

'No, please don't, look I will come with you,' I pleaded. It seemed like forever until he slowly lowered his wand. I sighed in relief, the last thing I needed this morning was him in my mind telling me what to do. Not only would it hurt but it was frustrating as I was powerless to stop it. Professor Chimney turned in the direction of the Great Hall. The corridors were nearly empty apart from the occasional student; everyone else must already be at breakfast. The few students that I did see stared at me and whispered amongst themselves but hurry on when Professor Chimney threw them a look. At the student's door to the Great Hall, Professor Chimney turned to me,

'You will be fine, I shall see you in the classroom later for our lesson.' He smiled and walked away.

I took a deep breath and tried to tell myself that I will indeed be fine. All I have to do is walk in there, have a little breakfast and then it will all be over. I reached out for the door handle and walked in. The silence that greeted me is deafening. I sat down on one of the benches at the Gryffindor table. My heart was racing and I was shaking. The people either side of me shuffle down the bench, obviously wanting to be as far away from me as possible. I kept my head down and looked at the bowl in front of me. The Great Hall

seemed so noisy with lots of whispering and everyone seemed to have stopped eating their breakfast. I bit my lip and tried to stop the tears which were threatening to fall.

Professor Dumbledore tapped his glass with a spoon,

‘Please could I have your attention for a moment.’ The whispered ceased as everyone turned to face Professor Dumbledore. ‘Thank you. I am sure that most of you by now have heard a rumour about our newest student Miss Jones. The truth is that she is indeed Tom Riddle’s daughter, who is better known as Voldemort and she is actually a muggle.’ There was a gasp which was surprising as I was sure that is what most people knew anyway.

Professor Dumbledore continued, ‘I have always been aware of who her father is and brought her here as she is in great danger. I have always put the safety of the students here at this school first and despite what some of you may be thinking Miss Jones is not a threat to that safety. She is not in league with her father and has had little contact throughout the whole of her life with him. She has had no contact whatsoever with her father since coming to Hogwarts. She may be a Muggle but she does have an ability that sets her apart from other Muggles which she is developing with Professor Chimney and will most likely use in the upcoming battle against her father. Therefore, I want her to be treated with respect. Breakfast is served.’ He clapped his hands and the tables filled with breakfast.

The chattering resumed. I picked up my spoon and played with the porridge in front of me wondering how long I have to be here before I could escape. Someone opposite me kicked me hard on my leg. I resisted the urge to rub my leg which was now throbbing and continued to look at my porridge. There was another kick, this time even harder. I bit my lip. Whoever was kicking me really should consider trying out for a local football team as I think they would do well. After a third kick and my legs begging me to do something before another kick came my way, I looked up slowly and for the first time noticed who was sitting opposite, before I hadn’t really taken in anyone’s faces, and to my horror I was sitting opposite Ron. Harry was one side of him and Hermione and Ginny the other. They were

all just staring at me. I looked down at my porridge and felt another kick. I looked up again,

‘What do you want?’ I asked quietly.

‘You may have fooled Dumbledore but you haven’t fooled me.’ Ron spat at me.

‘Just leave her alone, Ron,’ Hermione said.

‘Yes, she isn’t worth it,’ Harry said bitterly.

‘I just wanted her to know that I am onto her and if she so much as looks at you in a funny way I won’t hesitate to protect you.’

‘I’m not going to do anything, look I will stay out of your way, I’ll...’ I hesitated not knowing what else to say.

‘Whatever,’ Ron said. ‘It doesn’t matter because as far as I am concerned you are nothing.’

I blinked away the tears.

‘Ginny found this in the dormitory, it must have been forgotten when your things were packed.’ I looked at what he was holding. It was a folded piece of paper. I recognised it as being a letter from my Mum.

‘Oh, thanks. Can I have it back please?’ I said and held out my hand.

‘Is it something precious to you? Looks like some kind of letter, though it doesn’t say who it is from, how strange.’

It wasn’t strange at all really as the letter had come in the birthday card that my Mum had given to me personally so she hadn’t needed to sign it.

‘Well...’ I started to try and explain.

‘Shall we have a closer look?’ Ron said opening the letter. Most of the Gryffindor table was silent and observing the scene that is taking place.

‘Ron, I think you should just leave it,’ Ginny said.

Ignoring her Ron started to read, ‘to my darling daughter, well I think we know who this is from – dear old daddy eh?’

I shook my head, ‘no...’

‘As if we would believe anything you said,’ Ron said and continued reading. ‘I want you to know that I am very proud of you and what you have achieved. You mean everything to me and I would do anything for you.’

‘Please stop,’ I whispered, hearing my Mum’s words that she had carefully written with so much love being read by someone who was clearly despising me and wanting to hurt me was killing me.

Ron ignored me, and even seems slightly pleased with my reaction, ‘You are the light of my life. You are growing into a beautiful young woman who is a pleasure to know. I am so proud to call you my daughter. I love you so much.’

Tears were rolling down my face. I wiped them away, ‘please can I have my letter back? Please?’ I asked.

‘Ron, give it back,’ Ginny asked. I looked at her with surprise. She looked on the verge of tears. ‘It is obviously a personal letter that means a lot to Rebecca, I didn’t tell you about it for you to do this.’

‘Ginny, what she did to you and Harry is unforgivable,’ Ron said and threw me an evil look and to my horror started to rip up the letter into small bits.

‘No!’ I cried out. ‘Please!’ But it was too late. The last thing my Mum gave me was lying in tiny bits on the table.

‘Don’t get too upset, I am sure Daddy will write you another one,’ Ron said.

‘It wasn’t from my father, not that it is any of your business it was from my Mum,’ I felt anger rising in me and I had to get out of the room. I stood up. As I walked away I heard Ginny say,

‘Ron you shouldn’t have done that, her Mum is dead remember.’

I started walking to the door trying to ignore everyone staring at me. I was the first to get up from the tables.

‘Miss Jones, sit back down at your table. Breakfast is not over.’ It was Professor Chimney. The fact that he used Miss Jones rather than Rebecca was not lost on me, he was clearly not pleased. I had asked him to call me Rebecca as I wasn’t really comfortable with being called Miss Jones. I ignored him and reached the door, just as I was about to turn the door handle, I heard a spell being called out from behind me. I closed my eyes and hoped what I think has happened hasn’t actually happened but when I tried to turn the door handle it will not open. I rested my head on the door.

‘Miss Jones, sit down!’ Professor Chimney said.

I ignored him and tried and shook the door open, ‘please just let me go, please.’

‘Not until you have finished breakfast,’ Professor Chimney was right behind me now.

‘I can’t, please,’ I said quietly.

‘I am going to give you a count of five before I physically move you, 1, 2, 3...’

I heard another spell being said, I recognised the voice as Ginny’s. I tried to turn the door handle again and it opened.

‘Thank you,’ I said and looked directly at Ginny before quickly running out. Professor Chimney ran after me. I tried to get away from him but he was too quick and grabbed me, he took my wrist and led me. Knowing that it was pointless to resist I gave in and just followed him. We reached the classroom, once inside he released my wrist. He handed me some tissues and I wiped my eyes. He sat down in a chair and I sat down opposite him. I curled up my legs under me and looked at the floor.

There were a few minutes of silence, before Professor Chimney looked at me with an intense expression on his face, 'I'm disappointed in you.'

'You're disappointed in me? Well I am disappointed in you. What are you trying to do to me? I have done everything that you wanted me to do. You told me to go to breakfast, that it was the best thing to do and I did go to breakfast.'

'Leaving before eating anything doesn't count.'

'Oh doesn't it well according to you my feelings don't count. I am a human being not a robot I have feelings. So I am sorry that I couldn't stand being in there,' I pointed in the direction of the Great Hall 'any longer. Everyone was staring at me, everyone hating me. I had to think of myself for once and I couldn't be in there anymore. Not after what happened.'

'What happened? Did you have a few evil looks, a few whispers?'

I stood up, I felt so angry, 'oh yes I had those but the final straw was when Ron started to read out a letter that I got from my Mum on my last birthday. It must have got left behind when I had to move. I begged him to stop and to give it back to me but he wouldn't. They thought it was from him, my father, Voldemort, as if. He then ripped up the letter. So I'll say it again I am so sorry that I left but I had to. I didn't want to carry on sitting there when the last thing my Mum ever gave me was laying ripped into tiny shreds on the table. That letter meant so much to me.' I stopped pacing the room and slid down one of the walls and hid my head in my hands.

'I had no idea, Rebecca, I'm sorry,' Professor Chimney knelt in front of me.

'I hate all this, you know, I really hate this. I hate myself for being who I am, Voldemort's daughter. I hate what he has done, what he is doing, what he is planning to do. I mean this is bad but it will only get worse.' I looked up. Professor Chimney stroked my arm softly.

'We will get through this together,' he said.

Pride Comes Before A Fall

The next few weeks were a bit of blur. I just tried to keep my head down and not make eye contact with any of the other students. Whenever I walked down a corridor I could sense people talking about me and some people even pushed past me, I was becoming bruised on my arms with all the times I had been pushed against the walls. The worst times were when I had to go to the Great Hall for meals. I had asked, well actually begged may be the better word, Professor Chimney and had even gone to Professor Dumbledore if I could have my meals in my room. But they had both repeatedly refused saying that I shouldn't isolate myself and sleeping separately was enough. So I struggled through the meal times eating little and quickly. I got up early for breakfast before the majority of the students were there. As time went on, I felt myself withdraw into myself. I started to feel numb whenever I heard someone shout abuse at me or try and trip me over rather than wanting to cry or run away. My lessons with Professor Chimney were going well considering how I was often distracted by what was happening. The room we had lessons in became like a safe haven for me and I tried to put all my energy into the lessons.

I was on my way to one of my lessons thinking about all that I had achieved in the few months I had been here. I was become very skilled at becoming invisible in someone's mind and discovering something that they didn't want anyone else to know. I was also quite competent at my long distance truth-seeking. What was harder though was stopping someone who knew about my truth-seeking from controlling me as I was so vulnerable without a wand. I reached the classroom and knocked before entering. Professor Chimney was not here yet, I looked at my watch, and realised I was a bit early. I settled myself in the chair and picked up one of the books on truth-seeking and started to browse through it.

A few minutes later Professor Chimney walked in.

'Good morning Rebecca.' He said and sat down opposite me. 'How are you this morning?'

'Fine, I am raring to go.'

‘Well before we start, I need to talk to you. Professor Dumbledore and Professor McGonagall have spoken to me, they are very concerned about you, and how you are coping with everything? You seem to be fine on the outside but how are you on the inside?’

I said nothing and refused to meet his eyes. Professor Chimney reached out and touched my knee.

‘How long has it been now since everyone found out about your father?’

‘A month and two weeks,’ I whispered.

‘I wish there was something I could do to help you through what must be a very difficult time.’

‘I’m ok, mostly, I think I am getting used to it. It just really hurts sometimes. I suppose deep down I knew that they would find out at some point but part of me thought that if they got to know me then they would be able to look beyond the fact that my father is Voldermort and see me for who I really am. I thought that they had, you know, got to know me to see that I am nothing like him. But, no, according to them I am involved in some kind of secret plot with him and set on bringing down Harry. The way they all look at me sometimes, if looks could kill you know I would be dead several times over.’ I said quietly feeling tears running down my face.

Professor Chimney handed me a tissue.

‘You had become quite close to Harry, Hermione, Ron and Ginny, hadn’t you?’

‘Yes, stupidly, I should have stayed away from them but they were so friendly and I had been so lonely since my mother was killed.’

‘Are you lonely now?’

I looked at him and nodded. ‘I just wish I didn’t have to be here, anyway would be better then here.’

We sat for a few minutes as I tried to stop crying.

'I have an idea, Rebecca which may help the situation.'

I looked at him confused.

'How do they think your mother died?'

'I don't think I have ever given a reason for her dying, well certainly not the real one.'

'Well I think they may change their opinion of you if they see for themselves what happened to her and you. I think you should show what happened to your mother.'

I stood up and walked away from him.

'I know that it will be hard for you, but I know that you can do it Rebecca and it may be for the best.'

'No.' I said firmly. 'I can't, I won't.'

'At least think about it.'

'No, I am not going to show them what happened, use my mother's death to get them to feel sorry for me, it probably wouldn't do any good anyway they are so loyal to Harry.'

'Well, I think you should try it.'

'I'm not going to do it. You can't make me. I have done so much that you all wanted me to do. I lied about who I was and have worked so hard at whatever you have asked me to. I don't even want to be here, I never have but I have no choice in so much but for this I do have a choice. I am not going to do it.' I said and felt myself shaking slightly.

Professor Chimney stood up, walked over to me and touched my shoulder.

'I'm sorry Rebecca, it is up to you. I promise I will never make you do it.'

I rubbed my eyes and blew my nose.

‘Right,’ I said. ‘I’m ready, hit me with it.’

‘Are you sure?’

‘Yes, let’s get this over with.’

‘Ok, then, really remember what I have said. Think clearly about questioning whatever I tell you to do regardless of the consequences.’

I nodded and sat back down. Professor Chimney pointed his wand at me and whispered the words that I had begun to dread, ‘entrerio tetera.’

I put my hand on my head which had begun to throb. I heard Professor Chimney’s voice in my head,

‘If you want the pain to go away, all you have to do is pick up the book that is on the floor.’

The pain intensified as I paused to pick up the book which is on the floor by my feet.

‘You know you want to, it is so simple, all you have to do is pick it up and the pain will end.’ The voice said in my head.

I replied, ‘well I don’t want to pick up the stupid book. Pick it up yourself.’

The pain became almost unbearable, it was at this point that I normally gave up and did whatever I had been asked to do. This time I gritted my teeth.

‘Reach out your hand and pick the book up.’

My arm started to move but I held it back with the other arm.

‘NO!’ I said.

This time the pain reached a level that made me cry out loud. I closed my eyes.

‘Pick up the book!’ the voice said clearly getting angry.

‘What book?’ I said ‘I can’t see any stupid book. I have got my eyes closed. If you want the book so badly pick it yourself.’ Feeling brave I reached out in my mind to the connection that had been made between my mind and the Professor’s. The connection that could be made with a wand was not as strong as one that was made by a truth-seeker so I could easily break it. What had stopped me before and made me pause now was that I knew that if you broke a connection between two minds that you didn’t create, unless you were able to protect yourself with a simple spell, the breaking of the connection would cause great pain. Being unable to cast spells, I knew that what I was about to do was going to hurt even more than the pain I was feeling and I braced myself. On closing the connection I was hit by what seemed like a force. I screamed and then everything seemed to go black.

‘Rebecca, dear? Can you hear me?’

I slowly opened my eyes and saw Professor Chimney kneeling before me. He handed me the book that had been lying on the floor. With a smile he said, ‘all I wanted you to do was put the book away. You were the one who got it out of the bookcase.’

I smiled back and walked over to the bookcase and placed the book back in the right place.

‘See, not that hard is it?’ Professor Chimney asked still smiling.

I suddenly felt a bit dizzy. Professor Chimney quickly walked over to me and stopped me from falling. He helped me walk over to the chair.

‘Take it easy, Rebecca, what you just did was completely amazing but you will suffer some side effects.’

‘Amazing, eh?’

‘Yes, I always knew that you were very skilled but to be completely honest I didn’t think that you would be able to do it.’

‘Well, it will be different won’t it when I face him won’t it?’

‘Rebecca, I want you to know that there was nothing else I could have done to make you pick up that book. I am confident now that you would be able to stop anyone who tried to tell you to do something. The first time is always worse. Well done Miss Jones.’

I smiled and sat back in the chair.

‘Well we have about half an hour until lunch but I think I am justified in letting you go early. Oh and also have a hundred house points for Gryffindor.’

‘A hundred?’ I said.

‘Yes, Miss Jones, I am rather proud of you.’ He said smiling broadly.

‘Enough of the Miss Jones business, my name is Rebecca. You have always called me Rebecca, don’t change it now.’ I said walking towards the door.

‘Ok, Rebecca, do you feel ok?’

‘Yes, actually I do. I feel amazing. I shall see you after lunch.’ I smiled and walked out of the room. The corridors were empty as I walked down to the Great Hall. Lunch had already been laid out and I helped myself to some sandwiches and a bottle of water. I decided though to take them outside to sit back by the lake sure that I would be let me off eating with everybody else. I felt so happy, the first time in over a month and didn’t want anything to ruin it well not yet anyway. I walked out the Great Hall and down the steep flight of stairs to the lake. It was a lovely sunny day, the skies were clear and I even felt warm enough to take off my cloak. I laid it out on the grass and sat on it. I ate my sandwiches and took sips of my drink. Contented I laid down on the cloak and looked up at the clouds. I must have dozed off as I woke up about an hour and a half later. I quickly gathered up my things thinking that I was going to late for my afternoon lesson with Professor Chimney. I walked quickly to the stairs and saw lots of students heading down them, they must be heading for one of their lessons I thought to myself angry that I had let myself fall asleep. I looked down at the floor and fastened my pace and reached the

bottom of the stairs. I clambered up them as quickly as I could. I was pushed about a bit and heard some people shout but I tried to block it all out. I finally reached the top of the stairs and breathed a sigh of relief. I looked up and saw Harry, Ron, and Hermione staring at me.

'We didn't see you at lunch, thought you had finally got the message and GOT LOST.' Ron shouted angrily and walked menacingly towards me.

'Ron,' Hermione said calmly. 'Let's just go, Hagrid will be waiting for us. Look everyone has gone. I don't want to be late.'

I attempted to take the opportunity to walk away but felt someone grab my arm.

'Hermione, you go ahead and you Harry, I just want to talk to HER for a moment.'

'Ron,' Harry said. 'Just leave her alone, she isn't worth it.'

I looked at the ground at this point. Ron was squeezing my arm so hard it hurt but I didn't say anything. All the other students had disappeared.

'I know that.' Ron said and spat in my face. 'You are nothing Rebecca, why don't you do everybody a favour and just go. No one wants you here.'

I whispered, 'I have nowhere else to go.'

'Oh won't your precious Daddy look after you? You don't fool me Rebecca, not any more, I see you for who you are. A scheming little so and so, you make friends with us especially Ginny. Was that part of the plan? Use Ginny to get at Harry or something like before?'

'No,' I said 'There is no plan. Please just let me go. I'll stay out of your way.'

Ron tightened his grip.

'That's what you want isn't it? Now your plan has fallen through.'

'Let go of me.' I shouted. I was becoming angry now. 'You are hurting me.'

'Do I look bothered?'

'Ron?' Harry said. 'Come on let's go.'

'No, not until she knows that if she tries anything to hurt you she will have to come through me.'

'For the last time, I am not going to hurt Harry or anyone. I am not in league with my father; I haven't seen him since he killed my mother and nearly killed me. That kind of put me off him you know. I haven't done anything to deserve any of this, all the looks everyone has been given me all the shoves everything. Do you all think that I don't feel anything? That I am not affected by what you are all doing to me? Well I have just about had enough. I didn't chose to be Voldermort's daughter, I didn't chose for him to become this evil wizard, I didn't chose for him to kill my Mum, I didn't chose to be brought here and forced to integrate with everyone here and lie about who I was, I didn't choose anything. I have been trying to stay away from you. I must have fallen asleep by the lake otherwise I would already be out of your way.' I looked at Harry, 'Harry, I am so sorry that you had to find out about me the way you did, and I know that saying sorry will never mend the hurt and pain that I caused you. I should have stayed away from you but you were all so lovely to me. I thought you would be able to look beyond my name, beyond the fact that I am Voldermort's daughter but obviously not and I don't blame you. All I want is to be left alone so I can do what I have to do. I am going to be late for my lesson, will you please let me go?' I said. Ron let go of my arm. I turned away from them and started to walk away.

'RON, HERMIONE, HARRY, COME ON YOU ARE LATE.' This made me jump and I lost my footing and felt myself fall down the stairs. Shooting pain hit me, when I finally reach the bottom everything faded to black.

A Strange Conversation

'Rebecca, dear. Please open your eyes.'

I opened my eyes slowly and saw Hagrid towering over me.

'I am going to pick you up and take you to the hospital wing. It may hurt a little.'

Hagrid reached down and picked me up easily. I cried out as he moved me as my back and head really hurt. Hagrid turned to Harry, Ron and Hermione.

'You better go and tell the rest of the class where I am, I may be some time. Look over your notes from last week.'

Harry asked, 'is she ok?'

'She needs to go to the hospital wing now.'

Hagrid walked quickly to the hospital wing and lays me down on the nearest bed. Madame Pomfrey hurried over.

'What happened Hagrid? Did she faint or something?' She asked and began to feel my head.

'No, she fell down the stairs by the lake.'

'The stairs, where from?'

'She was at the top and fell all the way to the bottom.'

'Oh my goodness. Hagrid, can you go and tell Professor Dumbledore? This is very serious.'

I heard Hagrid left the room.

'Rebecca, dear can you hear me?'

I nodded and tried to look at her but my eyesight was a little blurry.

'Where does it hurt?'

‘All over really but my back and head are the worse.’

‘Ok, Rebecca, you need to stay awake. I am going to get you something for the pain.’

I looked at her, my eyelids felt so heavy.

‘Rebecca, you *must* stay awake.’ She turned to the boy in the bed next to me. ‘Will you talk to her please and ensure that she doesn’t go to sleep?’

‘Why should I?’ The boy replied.

‘Because, Mr Malfoy, if she falls asleep I don’t know if we will be able to wake her again.’

‘Oh’, the boy next to me said, who turned out to be none other then Draco Malfoy. The boy who had delighted in revealing to Harry what my true identity was.

He sat up and looked at me.

‘What the hell happened to you?’ He asked.

‘I fell down the stairs.’ I said sleepily and closed my eyes.

I felt someone poke me, ‘look you can’t fall asleep.’ Malfoy said and sat in the chair besides me.

‘Does it hurt?’ he asked.

I nodded. ‘Can we talk about something else though, if I can’t go to sleep?’

‘Sure, what do you want to talk about? We could always exchange stories about our fathers.’ I glared at him and tried to turn away from him, I cried out as it hurt.

‘Hey, I’m sorry, I shouldn’t have said that.’

‘No, you shouldn’t.’

There was an awkward silence between us. I broke it, 'why are you here anyway? Haven't you got lessons?'

'I feel a bit sick actually, probably something I ate at lunch. Talking about lunch where were you? I didn't see you.'

'I decided to eat my lunch by the lake.'

'It must be tough.'

I looked at him curiously; from what I had been told about Draco Malfoy was so cold he was unable to feel anything. Yet, he seemed to know how I was feeling. I nodded.

'Look,' he whispered and checked there wasn't anyone in hearing range. 'I am sorry that I told Harry about who you really are.'

'It's ok, he would have found out eventually.'

'But, it would have been better if I hadn't have rubbed it in his face.'

'Maybe, how long had you known anyway?' I said.

'Since your arrival at Hogwarts, there isn't much that gets past the Dark Lord. My father is one of his most loyal followers and so was told about you and my father passed on the information to me.'

'I suppose they are happy with how things are turning out,' I said calmly although I am alarmed to be in such a close proximity to someone who was connected to my father.

'I would expect so but I haven't had any contact with my father since coming back after Christmas.'

I looked up at the ceiling. My eyelids kept threatening to close.

'Hey, you really can't fall asleep.'

'You make it sound so easy, but it's the one thing that I really seem to want to do.'

'Well you can't. You heard what she said, if you fall asleep you may not wake up again.'

'You say that like it is a bad thing.' I said.

Draco looked shocked. 'Are things really that bad?'

'Sorry, I am being a bit dramatic, I didn't mean it.'

'But you said it therefore you have thought about it.'

'Maybe,' I said and looked away.

'Rebecca? How did you choose what side to fight for?'

'Fight for? What do you mean?'

Draco got up and started walking up and down by the bed.

'How did you choose to fight alongside Dumbledore and Potter and not with your father?'

I looked at him and realised that what I would say would be very important to him.

'Well, for me I didn't really have a choice, he killed my mum. Professor Dumbledore saved me so the decision kind of made itself.'

'Oh', he said.

'Sorry if that doesn't help.'

'No, it does help a bit. I just wanted to know really.'

'I think that you should make up your mind for yourself, don't let anyone convince you that their side is better, even me.' Draco sighed and sat back down.

'You are the first person who has even suggested to me that I have a choice.'

‘Thank you, Mr Malfoy, you have done a good job.’ It was Professor Dumbledore and Professor Chimney with Madame Pomfrey.

Draco got up and returns to his bed.

‘Now, Rebecca, you need to tell me what happened? Hagrid says he saw you at the top of the stairs with Harry, Ron and Hermione. He says he thinks Ron had your arm. He called out and then you fell...’ Professor Chimney said.

‘Did that Weasley do this to you?’ Draco said standing up again.

‘No,’ I said. ‘He was letting go of my arm and I was walking away when Hagrid shouted out. It made me jump and so I lost my footing.’

‘Are you sure?’ Professor Dumbledore asked.

‘Yes, it was an accident.’

‘Well, I think that you will need to go to St. Mungo’s, a wizard’s hospital.’ Professor Dumbledore said.

‘Albus, she will lose the protection of the school if she leaves the grounds. Hogsmeade was one thing but St. Mungo’s is miles away. We don’t know what will happen.’ Professor Chimney said concerned.

‘I know what the risks are but her injuries are serious and there is only so much Madame Pomfrey can do, she needs to be treated by experts. Besides I think it will do her good to get away from here for a few days.’

‘Well, if you are sure. She was doing so well, I told you what she achieved today. Why did this have to happen?’ Professor Chimney said clearly a little distressed.

‘I’m ok,’ I said.

‘I shall organise transport for you. You need to get there as soon as possible.’ Professor Dumbledore said and left.

Madame Pomfrey came over and gave me a potion to drink, which made me feel a bit light-headed but the pain faded a little. I was transported to the hospital which looked really like a normal muggle hospital, just without all the machines and instead with potions and wands. I was placed in a private room. A doctor came and saw me,

‘Hello, Miss Jones. I’m Doctor Medin, I will be your doctor while you are with us. I need to examine you now.’

I was repositioned onto my front and Doctor Medin felt the whole of my back and my neck. This was a little painful so I gripped the sides of the bed. He turned to Professor Chimney who had accompanied me to the hospital.

‘You were right to send her here. I think she will need her back realigned. It is a simple enough procedure though. I shall book her in for this afternoon.’

‘An operation?’ I said slightly worried.

‘Yes, an operation. We shall put you to sleep but it should only take an hour or two.’

‘Oh, ok.’ I said.

‘Do you need anything more for the pain?’

‘No, I think I am ok actually, thanks.’ I replied as the pain was now just a numb ache.

The doctor left to continue on his ward round. Professor Chimney sat down in the chair by my bed.

‘You don’t have to stay, I will be fine.’ I said.

‘Well, to be honest Rebecca, I have nothing else to do and besides I don’t want you to have to go through this on your own.’

I smiled back at him, ‘this isn’t as different to a muggle hospital as I thought it would be.’

'No? Did you have many visits to hospital?'

'No, only well after my mother died but I only vaguely remember that.' I looked away from him at the memory.

'It must be hard for you with your mother gone.'

'Sometimes, I really miss her, we were so close. It was just me and her mostly, I mean I had friends at school but she was my best friend.'

'You have had so much to deal with this year.'

I nodded, 'and the year isn't over yet.'

'Do you think much about your father?'

'Well, apart from the fact that I know he will come back one day, not really. I try not to as I know that most of the memories I have of him are false anyway and I now see a blur instead of him in them. The spell must have been broken or something.'

'When you fell, Hagrid said he saw you talking to Ron, Harry and Hermione. You weren't at lunch, I thought you had gone back to the class room early but you weren't there. What happened?'

'After you let me go early, I walked down to the Great Hall picked up some food and decided to eat outside by the lake. I just was feeling so happy I didn't want anything to ruin it. I must have fallen asleep and when I woke up students were coming down the steps as I was going up them. I made it to the top to be faced by Ron, Harry and Hermione. Ron got cross, I tried to walk away but he grabbed my arm. Well let's just say we exchanged words. I got upset and ended up blurting out about my Mum, it's just he kept going about how I was plotting to hurt Harry and I just wanted to be left alone. He let go of my arm and I was just walking away when Hagrid called out. I guess it made me jump, or I was still upset and not really concentrating on where I was going and I lost my footing.'

'No one pushed you then?'

‘No, no one is to blame, apart from me probably for being clumsy.’

Professor Chimney picked up a book and started to browse through it.

‘Sir?’ I started.

‘Yes?’

‘This won’t affect what I have learnt, put me backward or anything will it?’

‘No, I don’t think it will. Like I said you have already surpassed my expectations of you. Whatever more you learn to do when you return to school will be a bonus. Besides I think you deserve a bit of a rest.’

‘Professor Dumbledore thought that I could die if I left the school grounds.’

‘We were a little concerned but then this is still in the wizardry world. You may still be protected as long as you don’t return to the muggle world.’

‘Oh,’ I said and let him return to his book.

It was about an hour later when Doctor Medin returned and prepared me for the operation.

‘Right, Miss Jones.’

‘Rebecca, please.’

‘Ok, Rebecca, we are ready for you now. If you take this potion, it will send you to sleep and we shall take you to the operating theatre.’

I nodded and take the potion. It must have been very fast acting as I had barely finished drinking it when I felt my eyelids close.

‘She is just coming round now.’ I heard a voice say. I opened my eyes slowly.

‘Rebecca, the operation was a complete success. You should be out of here in a few days with no permanent problems. I shall leave you to recover, you will need plenty of rest.’ Doctor Medin said before leaving the room. I looked around me and saw that I was back in the room I was before. Professor Chimney stood over me.

‘Hello Rebecca, how are you feeling?’

‘Fine, just sleepy, it doesn’t hurt as much now.’

‘Well, if I don’t mind I shall head back to Hogwarts to let them all know how it went. I shall try and come and see you tomorrow.’

‘Ok, thanks for everything.’ Professor Chimney left the room as well.

Mending Minds

I spent most of the next few days sleeping. I woke up on the third day and felt a lot better. I sat up and stretched out as I felt a bit stiff. My door opened and I was surprised when a woman came in, she must have been about the same age as my Mum. She was dressed in hospital pyjamas with bright pink slippers.

'Hello', I said. 'Can I help you?' She looked at me, with a vague expression.

'Hello,' she replied. 'I'm Alice, do you know where Frankie is?'

'Frankie? No I don't know where Frankie is.'

A nurse came hurrying in, 'Alice, there you are, you know you must not run away. Sarah? It's ok I've found can you take her back?' She said, as another nurse appeared and gently lead the woman away.

'Sorry about that, we try to keep an eye on her but all you have to do is turn your back on her and she has gone.' She looked at Alice and the other nurse leaving. 'It's a shame really, Alice was an amazing witch before this happened to her. Her husband, Frank is the same, driven insane by the crucio curse placed on them ordered by You-know-who. It's their son I feel most sorry for, he visits regularly but they don't even recognise him. You may know him, he goes to Hogwarts, Neville, Neville Longbottom.'

'Alice is Neville's mother?' I said in surprise.

'Yes, anyway I better leave you to get some rest.'

The nurse left and I laid back down on my bed and thought. I couldn't believe that I had met someone else who had been hurt by my father. He may not have hurt them directly but it was because of him. A picture of Neville came into my head. I couldn't imagine what it must feel like to not have your parents recognise you. If only there was something I could do... oh that's it... but would it work? Well I had to try. I got out of bed; I was a little shaky but there was hardly any pain. I reached for my dressing gown and put on my slippers. I walked out of the room and checked to see no one is watching as I sensed that if

someone knew what I was going to do they would try and stop me. I started walking in the direction I had seen the nurses and Alice go. I got a bit confused but finally found the ward that seemed the most appropriate. I looked in and there was Alice, she was sitting opposite a man of the same age who I assumed was her husband, Neville's father. I took a deep breath and opened the door into the ward. The nurses looked over to me.

'Hello, I was wondering if I could just sit with Mr and Mrs Longbottom for a while.' They looked a bit surprised but one of them nodded my head.

I sat down at the table where Alice and Frank were.

'Hello, I'm Rebecca.'

'Hello, have you come to play with us?' Alice asked.

'Yes.'

'Good,' said Frank.

Right, I think to myself here goes nothing. I made eye contact with Frank for a second or two before he looked away but that is enough. I made the connection. I do not waste my time in making myself invisible as it did not matter. Frank looked at me strangely as I searched through his brain trying to find the loose connection in his brain. I tried to send Frank calming messages which seemed to work as he sat still and did not become alarmed. I came across what looks to me like a rope that had become very frayed and was in fact only held together by a thin piece of rope. Having found the source of the insanity I started to mend it. I concentrated hard on imagining I was wrapping the tear in the rope with more rope so the link is mended. This took longer then I thought but satisfied, I gently broke the connection between our minds. Frank, Mr Longbottom looked at me.

'Thanks.' He said simply.

I smiled and turned to Alice. I made the connection and did the same to Alice, it was slightly quicker this time. I closed the connection. I closed my eyes as I felt a little dizzy.

'Are you ok dear?' Mrs Longbottom asked.

'Yes, just a little dizzy.'

'Well, I'm not surprised. Thank you so much.' She said and hugs me tightly.

'Is everything ok over here?' A nurse has walked over.

'I should say so,' Mr Longbottom said. 'This young girl has returned sanity to my wife and I.'

The nurse looked surprised. 'What have you done?' She asked me, 'I think you should go.'

I stood up, 'I am a truth-seeker, I can read people's minds. They had a loose connection in their minds and I fixed it. It was only a temporary fix but they should be able to mend it now by themselves. They may suffer from memory loss sometimes but there is only a small chance of this.' I started to walk to the door.

'Please don't go, stay for a bit. We are so grateful, words can't really express it.' Mrs Longbottom said.

'I really should be getting back to my room before I'm missed.'

'Well, ok then dear, take care of yourself. I'm sure we will meet again.' Mr Longbottom said.

I walked towards the door.

'What are you doing here?' I looked up to see who said that. It was Neville. 'Have you done something to my parents? Finish off what your father started?' He grabbed me and pushed me against the wall. I was about to say something when another voice calls out.

'Neville, my dear son. Let Rebecca go, she has helped us.' It was Mrs Longbottom. I watched Neville's face change from anger to shock. He let go off me and walked slowly to his parents. I quietly walked out of the room and smiled to myself. It felt so good to have helped someone to have put right something that my father had done. I

walked back to my room and laid on my bed as I was still feeling a little shaky.

That evening, Professor Chimney came and visited me. He looked annoyed.

‘Why did you do it, Rebecca?’

‘What?’

‘Don’t what me, young lady you know exactly what I am talking about. I have just bumped into the Longbottoms.’

‘Oh, that.’ I said.

‘Yes, that.’

‘Well, I just thought there could be something I could do and I was right wasn’t I? I mean they are better now, aren’t they?’

‘Oh, yes, you did a good job. They, and Neville are extremely grateful but that is not the point here.’

‘Well what is the point?’

‘Don’t speak to me like that.’ Professor Chimney said and to my surprise slapped me round the face. I shrank away from him and moved to the other side of the room.

‘I was only trying to help, and I have helped.’

‘At what cost though?’

‘What do you mean, at what cost?’

‘To you, to your abilities.’

‘To me? I am fine, just a bit dizzy. Nothing has changed.’

‘Let’s see, shall we?’ Professor Chimney reached for his wand and said the spell, ‘entrerio tetera.’ I crumpled to the floor with the pain that hit me.

I heard his voice in my head, ‘right, make your bed.’

I shook my head, and replied ‘no, I am determined not to do what you want me to do.’

‘Well then face the consequences,’ the voice said. I scrunched up my face as the next wave of pain hit me. ‘Make your bed.’

‘NO!’ I shouted. I quickly tried to find the connection. I found it once but then am distracted as there was another wave of pain. I found the connection again and try to block out the pain as I prepared to break it. I braced myself and broke the connection. The pain was intense, but I didn’t pass out this time. I laid still on the cool floor, my heart was beating really fast, and I tried to slow down my breathing. When I felt calmer I stood up slowly and walked towards my bed. I sat on it facing away from Professor Chimney.

‘Rebecca?’

‘Look, just go, please.’

‘You have every right to be angry with me. I am sorry, I didn’t have enough faith in you. I keep forgetting how strong you are.’ He walked over to me. I looked up at him.

‘Maybe, I shouldn’t have done what I did but I would do it all over again even if it did mean that my truth-seeking abilities were affected. I would have helped them even if it meant I could never truth-see again. They didn’t deserve what happened to them and He did it to them. I just wanted to do something positive.’

‘It wasn’t your fault, Rebecca, your father was responsible, not you.’

‘I know that but I just wanted to do something positive to help. I feel so useless sometimes being unable to cast magic. I know that you want me to be involved in the battle, but I honestly don’t know if I will be any use.’ I said with tears running down my face.

‘Rebecca, do you know that you are one of the bravest and kindest persons I have ever met? You are so hard-working and determined. You are such a pleasure to teach. I shouldn’t have lost my temper with you. I have been so worried about you with your accident. I thought that all your hard work had been wasted but I, as usual, underestimated you. Did you realise that before your arm moved to pick up the book but this time I couldn’t make you do anything?’

I shook my head.

‘Come here,’ he said gently and pulled me into a hug.

After a few minutes we pulled away.

‘Am I forgiven?’

I nodded, ‘yes, am I?’

‘Yes, but I think you should be moved back to Hogwarts before you cause any more damage.’ He said smiling at me.

I returned to Hogwarts that night. It felt good to be back in the room that I had come to see as mine, by the hospital wing. Madame Pomfrey fussed over me for a while but Professor Chimney convinced her that if I was well enough to heal two people of their insanity and than fight off being controlled by someone I was well enough to have been discharged from hospital. The next morning Professor Chimney came and collected me.

‘Rebecca, Professor Dumbledore would like to see you in his office.’

‘Oh, ok.’ I said concerned.

‘Don’t look so worried, I don’t think it is anything bad unless you have got yourself into more trouble.’

I let him lead me to Professor Dumbledore’s office. He said the password under his breath and we entered the office.

‘Oh, Miss Jones, it’s good to see you up and about. Come and sit down we are just waiting for some more people.’

I sat down on one of the chairs. The door to his office open and Harry and Neville walk in.

‘Mr Potter, Mr Longbottom, please sit down.’

Neville walked over to me and gave me a hug. ‘I’m sorry Rebecca, I was so horrible to you at the hospital. Thank you so much. You have no idea how much it means to me that my parents are well again and they can call me by my name now.’ I smiled back at him.

‘Yes, Miss Jones it was an amazing thing you did for Mr and Mrs Longbottom. Mr Longbottom, if that is all you wanted to say would you mind leaving now?’ Neville nodded and left the room.

‘Why did you do it?’ To my surprise it was Harry who asked this question.

‘What do you mean why did I do it? I was able to help so I did, anyone in my position would have done the same.’

‘But, we have been so horrible to you.’ Harry said and looked down at the floor.

‘With good reason.’ I whispered.

‘No, not with good reason. We should have been able to look beyond your name and to the person you are really.’

‘I understand why you acted the way you did.’

‘You understand?’

‘Yes,’ I said. ‘Voldemort, my father, has hurt so many people especially you two.’

‘What about you?’ Harry asked and looked straight at me.

‘Me?’

‘Yes, you. Why didn’t you tell us what happened to you and your mother?’

‘I didn’t want it to seem like I was using my mother’s death to make you feel sorry for me.’

‘But we may have acted differently if we knew.’

‘Well, no harm has been done, so what does it matter really?’ I said, trying to make him feel less guilty. ‘I am fine.’

‘Are you really?’

‘Yes.’

‘I have called you here to discuss what we are to do next.’ Professor Dumbledore said. ‘Professor Chimney has told me about what you have achieved, you should be very proud of yourself, Miss Jones.’ Harry looked puzzled. ‘Miss Jones, may be a muggle, but she is a truth-seeker which means she has the ability to read people’s minds. That is how she healed Mr and Mrs Longbottom. Professor Chimney has been working with her and she has recently overcome his attempts to control her through her mind which must have been very challenging.’

‘Oh, well done.’ Harry said. I smiled at him.

‘Thanks.’

‘I think we all know that Voldemort is preparing an attack. We don’t know when this will happen and how but we need to be prepared. I think that he will target you Harry as he has done so in the past and he may try and use you Rebecca.’

I swallowed hard and nodded my head.

‘Do you want me to try and reach him? Find out what his planning?’ I asked.

‘Although that is tempting I think that puts you in danger. All will become clear with time. We don’t need to take unnecessary risks.’ Professor Dumbledore replied.

‘So what can we do?’ Harry asked.

‘Well, you shall both continue your lessons as usual and we shall let Voldermort come to us. Any questions?’

We both shook our heads.

‘Right, I have kept you from your breakfast for long enough. You may go now. Miss Jones have two hundred points for Gryffindor on behalf of the Longbottoms.’

‘Thank you.’ I said and began to follow Harry and Professor Chimney out of the office. But thinking about something I turned back to Professor Dumbledore.

‘There is something, I have been meaning to ask you sir.’

‘Oh yes, Miss Jones, what can I do for you?’

I waited until we are alone. I sat back down in a chair. I bit my lip and thought about how to phrase it. Professor Dumbledore waited patiently.

‘I have been thinking about my parents. I mean, my Mum was a muggle wasn’t she?’

‘Yes, your mother was a muggle.’

‘Then I don’t understand. Why did Voldermort, hater of all muggles and half-bloods, of all people marry her?’

‘Do you have any ideas why?’

‘Well, I did think maybe it was some kind of power thing. He had power over her being a wizard and she being a muggle. Or maybe he was just using her for me and he killed her when he no longer needed

her. She had looked after me and brought me up and I had reached an age where he could use me.'

'Do you think he loved her?'

'No,' I said straight away but then thought about it a bit more. 'How could he have loved her? He killed her.'

'Love is a funny thing. It cannot be controlled even if you are a powerful wizard like Voldermort. Maybe he married your mother because despite everything he loved her. We may never know why he did what he did, it may well have been because he had ulterior motives.'

'Or, he could have loved her once.' I said feeling a little less confused.

The Dream

'Rebecca? What are you doing still in bed? You have missed breakfast and are very late for your lesson.'

I continued to lie very still in bed with my head hid in my pillows.

'Rebecca? What is wrong?'

I struggled with whether I should tell him about the dream or keep it to myself until I could figure out what it all meant. I decided on the latter. I sat up too quickly and immediately feel faint. I closed my eyes and tried to steady myself. I turned round to face Professor Chimney,

'Oh I am so sorry, I must have overslept. Give me five minutes, I shall get dressed and then I will meet you in the classroom.'

Professor Chimney looked confused but left the room. I decided against having a shower as I should hurry up and pull on my clothes instead. I cleaned my teeth and looked at myself in the mirror. I shall have to do, I thought to myself. I had been out of hospital for two weeks now and things had improved. There were still whispers and pointing whenever I came into contact with other students but people seem less convinced that I am in league with my father. Neville had been so lovely to me and had told the whole school what I had done which had definitely changed people's perceptive of me. I walked as fast as I could to the classroom and knocked on the door.

'Come in.'

I opened the door, 'sorry again, Professor Chimney. I shall work doubly hard to make up for it...' I paused as I noticed that Professor Chimney is not alone. Harry was sitting in one of the chairs.

'Hello.' He said shyly.

'Hello,' I replied and turned to Professor Chimney for an explanation. I had continued staying out of Harry and the others way as I didn't want them to think that my helping the Longbottoms' had to mean that we could be friends again – this would have to be their decision. Also I hadn't helped the Longbottoms with this ulterior motive in mind.

‘Nice of you to join us, Rebecca, before I explain what the plan is for this lesson I think I deserve an explanation.’

‘I’m really sorry but I overslept, it hasn’t happened before and it won’t happen again.’ I sat down in my normal chair. Professor Chimney handed me a plate of toast and a hot chocolate. ‘Thanks, you didn’t have to.’ I said as I took the plate and mug.

‘There is more to this morning then you are letting on, I know there is.’

I looked down at the floor, somehow I found myself unable to continue denying that there was nothing more to this morning then the fact that I had overslept.

‘I shall take your reaction as a sign that there is indeed something more that at the moment you do not want to reveal. I shall not ask you about it again and shall just hope that you shall tell me when you are ready.’

Harry and Professor Chimney watched me eat my toast. Once I had finished I got up and placed the empty plate and cup on the table by the door. I returned to my chair and folded my legs up under me.

‘Ok, I am ready.’ I said smiling. Harry looked a bit wary.

‘Harry has had the same dream, well nightmare really, for a week now. Professor Dumbledore believes that it may be important for us to find out what the nightmares are about but Harry is unable to recall them in the morning.’

‘Ummm, that could mean something, couldn’t it? That he can’t recall them in the morning but still knows that he has had a nightmare and that it is the same nightmare as the night before.’ Thinking, I got up and walked to the bookcase and finding the book I want took it out of the bookcase and returned to the chair. I browsed through the book until I found the page that I remembered reading a while back. ‘It says here that it is possible for someone to make you dream about something. So I suppose, in theory, someone could have put the dream into Harry’s mind magically and therefore it means something. If someone is able to do that then they would probably to make it so

the person dreaming could not recall it in the morning and only remember certain aspects. However, there is a chance that the content of the dream could be reached through searching Harry's mind so I suppose that is where I come in?'

Professor Chimney was smiling at me, 'nothing gets past you does it?'

'There can only be one person that is doing this.' Harry said quietly. The word Voldermort hung in the air but is not said by anyone.

'Are you sure this is such a good idea? Especially as I expect this is what He means to happen.' I said.

'If you don't think you can do it then don't worry about it.' Harry said and stood up.

'Rebecca, you know that you are perfectly capable of doing what we are asking you to do.'

'I know that I could do it, but it is whether I should do it. What happens if something goes wrong? We don't really know what he is capable of.'

'But we do know what you are capable of, Rebecca you can handle anything he tries and throws at you if indeed he does. I think the content of this dream is really important, too important to pass on this opportunity to find out more about it,' Professor Chimney said reassuringly.

'Personally, all I can say is that I trust you Rebecca.' Harry said and sat back down.

I got up and started pacing the small room. 'Ok,' I said finally. 'I shall try my best. If anything starts to feel wrong I shall stop.' I sat down opposite Harry. 'I won't bother making myself invisible in his mind, it is pointless. Don't look so worried Harry, it shouldn't hurt at all.'

I made the connection with Harry's mind. This happened easily as compared to what I can now do this seemed very basic.

‘Are you ok, Harry?’ I said in his mind.

‘I think so, this is so weird,’ Harry replied by thinking it.

I started to look through his memories and got to the section about dreams and found last night, ‘ok I think I have it.’ I said out loud.

‘Right, do you think you can play it out like on a screen?’ Professor Chimney asked.

‘Ummm, should be able to. It doesn’t seem like a normal memory though, must be the effects of the magic.’

I visualised pulling out the memory like pulling out a book from a bookcase. I felt a slight twinge of pain as I do this.

‘What’s happening?’ Harry asked.

‘We are nearly there, you aren’t feeling any pain are you?’

‘No, nothing, just feels strange.’

‘Ok I think I have it, is everyone ready?’ I asked opening my eyes. Both Harry and Professor Chimney nodded. I looked at a blank wall and projected the memory onto it. The picture that appeared was blurry and small.

‘Can you make it any better?’ Professor Chimney asked.

‘Not sure, I shall have to try and make the connection between Harry and mine minds stronger to try and overcome the barrier that has been put on it,’ I said and tried to do just this but each time I did it came undone. An idea came into my head, ‘ok, Harry I need you to look deep into my eyes. Picture that there is a connection between our minds, I always imagine it is like a rope. Keep focusing on that.’ I tried again to strengthen the connection. This time it stayed stronger for a while and then came undone. ‘Nearly there, again Harry please.’ I tried again and this time I could sense that the connection was stronger and stayed stronger. ‘Right here we go again,’ I opened my eyes and noticed that Harry was holding his head. ‘Harry? Are you ok?’

‘Yes, my scar just hurts a little, carry on,’ he said.

‘Ok,’ I projected the memory onto the wall again. This time the picture was clearer and bigger. It was of a small, dark room with a small window and there was only one chair for furniture. There was only one person in the room who had their back to us. The person seemed to notice our presence and turned around. It was my father, Voldemort, as it looked like he was looking right into my eyes I felt an intense pain in my head and I cried out involuntarily.

‘Rebecca?’ I heard Professor Chimney’s voice but he seemed so far away. ‘Keep the connection if you can, he is trying to get you to break it.’

I gritted my teeth and tried to ignore the pain. Voldemort turned to Harry,

‘Well, well, I see you have met my daughter,’ he said.

‘Rebecca? I don’t like this, I think you should stop,’ Harry said quietly.

‘It’s just a dream, Harry. It’s ok, as long as you aren’t feeling any pain,’ I said trying to reassure him even though I was slightly unnerved myself. Harry shook his head.

‘Has she told you my deal?’ Voldemort asked, his eyes were cold.

‘You know I haven’t, is that your only reason for causing him nightmares?’ I replied instead.

‘What deal?’ I heard Professor Chimney and Harry call out in unison.

Voldemort laughed, ‘well, I shall let you explain my deal, dear. Just to let you both know, the time of the battle is coming. The time when you and I shall meet again, Harry but this time one of us will die, and I don’t think it will be me. So prepare all you want but your efforts will be feeble and not enough. I could tell you when exactly I shall come but then that would ruin the element of surprise wouldn’t it and I know that at least Rebecca here likes surprises don’t you dear?’

‘Not from you,’ I said coldly knowing that he was referring to the night when he killed my mother.

‘Oh, it hurts to hear my own daughter speak to me like that, my own daughter. After all that I have done for you?’ Voldemort said looking straight at me.

‘What have you done for me? Oh yes sorry I was forgetting, you killed Mum and nearly killed me,’ I said angrily.

‘So bitter for someone so young. You know you should thank me for not killing you. If it wasn’t for your truth-seeking abilities then you would six-feet under, you filthy muggle. I see though that you have improved your truth-seeking but it won’t be enough to save you again’ he replied his eyes blazing with anger.

‘Well, if being a witch means I could have turned out like you then I am proud to be a muggle. Now if you haven’t got anything else important to say I am going to close the connection,’ I said and closed the connection between Harry and mine minds.

I pulled up my legs under me and closed my eyes. My head was thumping and I felt a bit dizzy, I had never had to make a connection like that and I thought it had taken it out of me.

‘What was that?’ Harry asked, ‘I thought it was a dream.’

‘It was to start of with, but he used it to make a connection to me. What you saw was a combination of your dream and him speaking in reality,’ I said quietly.

‘What did he mean about your truth-seeking abilities saving you?’ Harry asked.

‘He knew that Professor Dumbledore would take care of me, the muggle Hospital I was taken to would have had no ideas about how to deal with my injuries. If Professor Dumbledore hadn’t brought me here I would have died. I am here because he wants me to be here. I don’t know exactly what he has planned but he could try and control me to do something,’ I said.

‘But you could fight him Rebecca, you are strong, stronger than he thinks you are, you could overcome him,’ Professor Chimney said.

‘Well, I will try my best. I don’t think he will cause you to have a nightmare again Harry. He was just using you to get at me. There must be a connection between your minds, which causes your scar to hurt.’

‘A connection? Like the one you created between our minds?’ Harry asked.

‘I suppose so, why?’ I replied slightly puzzled.

‘I think I know what Harry is asking you to do. Do you think you could break the connection between Voldemort’s mind and Harry’s?’ Professor Chimney asked.

I felt my eyes widen in shock, ‘I don’t know. I suppose it could be possible. I could try.’

‘It may be worth a try, and could be useful,’ Professor Chimney asked.

I bit my lip, ‘what do you think Harry? I am afraid I think I don’t think I will be able to stop it hurting you but I shall try and make it as quick as possible.’

‘I trust you, Rebecca,’ Harry said and focused his green eyes on mine.

‘OK here I go,’ I made the connection between our minds again. It seemed to take forever to find what looks like another connection. When I reached it Harry touched his scar. ‘Sorry,’ I said, ‘ok I shall break it now.’ I concentrated on visualising cutting the connection which was like a thin piece of wool. As I started to do this a wave of pain hit me, I tried to ignore it and concentrated on continuing to break the connection. ‘Nearly done,’ I whispered. The piece of wool broke and disappeared, the pain was so intensive I felt myself slipping into unconsciousness.

‘Rebecca? You need to break the connection between Harry and you.’ I heard Professor Chimney said.

I bit my lip and closed the connection between Harry and I. I closed my eyes and breathed deeply.

‘Try and stay with us, Rebecca,’ Professor Chimney said softly.

‘What’s happening?’ I heard Harry asked.

‘Harry? Are you ok? Did it hurt you a lot?’ I asked, having realised that I would have to try and talk to avoid passing out from the pain.

‘Not too bad, at the moment I am more worried about you,’ Harry said.

‘I’ll be fine just give me a few minutes,’ I said and concentrated on breathing, in and out, in and out. Eventually the pain died away to a dull ache. I opened my eyes slowly.

‘Well I think it worked, judging on the pain,’ I said and tried to smile.

‘Here, have some of this,’ Professor Chimney handed me a glass. ‘It’s a painkilling potion.’

I reached out for the glass but my hands were shaking so much that I needed Professor Chimney to wrap his hands around mine and help guide it to my mouth. When I had finished drinking Professor Chimney replaced the glass on the table.

‘You never fail to amaze me, Rebecca,’ he said proudly.

‘Yes, that was amazing and the whole dream on the wall as well,’ Harry said, he looked a bit shocked about all that has happened.

‘What deal was he taking about?’ Professor Chimney asked the one question I had been dreading. ‘How did you know about it?’

‘It’s nothing, it’s not important,’ I said and looked down at the floor.

‘Oh I think it is. Voldemort wouldn’t have gone to all the trouble of implanting a dream into Harry’s mind with the intension that you would be needed to get at the meaning if it wasn’t important. I want you to tell me Rebecca,’ Professor Chimney asked.

‘I can’t,’ I said quietly.

‘Yes, you can,’ he replied quickly.

‘No, I can’t,’ I said standing up I headed towards the door but Professor Chimney stood in the way. He gripped my shoulders,

‘Tell me.’

‘Fine,’ I shrugged him off. ‘I shall tell you. Voldemort wants the protection barriers taken down around the school so he can apparate into the grounds. He wants the battle to take place here,’ I said quickly.

‘What he thinks we are just going to do that?’ Harry asked in disbelief.

‘No, there’s something else isn’t there, Rebecca?’ Professor Chimney asked.

I turned away from them both and sighed, ‘if the protection barriers are not taken down by the end of this week, then... then... he will kill me.’

‘He could do that? From a distance?’ Harry asked.

‘Yes, I am afraid I think he could do. I think he senses that you are firmly on our side and your skills are so developed that he won’t be able to control you,’ Professor Chimney asked.

‘Well now you know, and if you excuse me I need to get some fresh air,’ I said and walked towards the door again. This time I was not stopped and walked through the corridors. I didn’t even realise where I was going until I arrived at the lake. I sat down on the grass. It was a warm spring day; the sun was shining brightly and was reflected in the ripples on the surface of the water. I lost track of how long I sat there completely still just looking at the water.

‘Miss Jones? Professor Chimney has told me about the latest developments,’ it was Professor Dumbledore. ‘I have decided to send the majority of the students home so they will not be in danger. Only those that insist on staying will remain at the end of the week when I lift the protection barriers.’

'Lift the protection barriers? You are going to lift the protection barriers?' I said in shock and stood up to face him.

'Yes, you can't honestly believe that we would let him kill you,' he said softly.

'But I could try stopping him and even if I couldn't keeping the protection barriers up is more important than my life,' I replied.

'No, how can you think that? Voldemort will find a way to get to Harry even with the protection barriers up, he has done in the past and I have no doubt he could do so again. Therefore you would be killed for nothing,' he said calmly.

'But...' I was having trouble taking this all in.

'I have made up my mind, not there was anything to decide. You are an important person, Miss Jones, you have been through so much and have worked so hard. You don't deserve to be sacrificed. As I said the majority of the students will be safely back in their own homes before the barriers are lifted. At least we have had the warning and the time to do this. We will be able to gather all the witches and wizards that make up the Order of the Phoenix, those against Voldemort here so we can fight him together. Now I shall make the announcement over lunch, which is nearly here, will you walk with me to the Great Hall?'

I nodded. We walked towards the Great Hall. Professor Dumbledore pointed out how the trees were blossoming and how there are a few flowers emerging. I found myself only able to nod and smile in return. I was slightly overwhelmed. I supposed that I had almost come to terms with the fact that the protection barriers would remain and although this would mean that he would kill me it would be worth it for the protection of the rest of the students. Deep down I was relieved that this wasn't going to happen but I was worried about what would happen when the barriers did come down.

We had arrived at the Great Hall, Professor Dumbledore walked round to the teacher's entrance. I took a deep breath and walked into the hall. It looked like the majority of the students were already here, I

looked over to the Gryffindor table and Harry beckoned me over to sit in the space opposite him. I sat down.

'Hey, are you ok?' He asked.

'I think so. How about you?'

'I'm fine.'

Professor Dumbledore stood up, 'Please could I have your attention for a few moments.' He paused, 'it is regretful but I have had to inform your parents that Hogwarts will be closing at the end of this week.' There were gasps of surprise all over the hall. 'Only those who have their parent's permission will be allowed to stay. I have had to decide to do this as it has come to my attention that Voldemort is planning to attack the school probably at some point next week.' Another loud gasp. 'Therefore, afternoon lessons are cancelled. I suggest you take the time to pack as the train shall be leaving early tomorrow morning. You shall be kept up to date about events and will be told when it is safe to return. That is all.'

'So it is happening soon then?' Ron asked.

'Yes, afraid so,' Harry replied.

I took a bite from one of the sandwiches in front of me.

'Well, we always knew it would happen, I just didn't think it would be so soon,' Hermione said.

'Rebecca, this isn't your fault you know that don't you? He would have found a way even with the protection barriers up,' Harry said kindly.

I said nothing.

'Look, Rebecca, Harry has told us what happened this morning and he is right this isn't your fault. I cannot apologise enough for my behaviour towards you, it was unforgivable. My only explanation is that I tend to act first and think later,' Ron said.

'Yes, we should have tried harder to look beyond who your father is,' Ginny said and Hermione nodded in agreement.

'I understand why you behaved the way you did, I am sorry that I had to lie to you,' I said.

'I would like it if we could all try and be friends again, we need to work together if we have any chance of beating Voldemort, if that is ok with you Rebecca?' Harry said.

'Sure,' I said and despite everything found myself smiling.

'Good,' Harry smiled back.

'So does this mean, you can finally tell me about what you have been learning with Professor Chimney?' Hermione asked.

'Yes,' I said. 'I am a truth-seeker which means I can read minds basically. I have been developing my skills with Professor Chimney. I can now read people's minds without them knowing, and read people's mind over long distances. Recently I have been able to prevent someone from controlling me.'

'Wow, that is amazing. I remember my Dad telling me about truth-seekers once, they are really rare aren't they? Especially to be born with the ability, like you obviously were as it takes forever to learn how to be one, many give up trying' Ginny says. 'Do you read people's minds all the time?'

'No, that wouldn't be fair, only when I have to,' I replied.

'So, what are you learning to do now?' Hermione asked.

'Well nothing, Professor Chimney has run out of ideas so we have just been practicing and reading as much as we can about the subject to see if there is anything else I could learn that would prove useful. But there isn't that much written about it really,' I said.

'Would you mind if I did some research?' Hermione asked.

'No, of course not,' I replied.

Hermione seemed deep in thought and didn't join in with the rest of the conversation we shared as we finished our lunch. She ate quickly and excused herself to go to the library. I finished my drink, looked up to the teacher's table and noticed Professor Chimney was pointing at his head. I made the connection to his mind,

'You wanted me?' I asked.

'Yes, your lessons are cancelled as well this afternoon. There is no point as you have exceeded my expectations of you about twice over. Enjoy your time off.'

'Oh ok, bye then.' I said and closed the connection.

I turned back to Ginny, Ron and Harry. Ginny and Ron were looking a bit shocked, 'What?' I asked.

'Harry said you were truth-seeking,' Ginny explained.

'Oh that, Professor Chimney just wanted to tell me that this afternoon's lessons were cancelled, how did you know I was truth-seeking anyway?' I asked, turning to Harry.

'Your facial expression changes and you seem on a different planet,' Harry said.

'Oh, I see.' I said. 'Anyway, I suppose I could go and lend Hermione a hand.'

'I will come with you,' Ginny said.

'I would join you, but Professor Dumbledore wants to see me. I suppose to go through some spells or something,' Harry said and looked distracted.

'Great, on a sunny day like this and we shall be stuck in a library,' Ron said.

'So you are coming to then, don't distract us too much,' Ginny said smiling,

'Yes, you two go ahead, I shall walk Harry to where he is meeting Professor Dumbledore.'

Ginny and I stood up and walk together to the library.

'I have missed you so much, Rebecca.'

'I have missed you too.'

We smiled at each other and looked for Hermione in the library.

Some Party Trick

We spent most of the next couple of days in the library, Harry joined us when he wasn't having lessons with Professor Dumbledore and the other teachers. We made a dedicated group of researchers and I quickly lost count of how many books we looked through. I was browsing through a book when I heard Hermione let out a sigh, I looked up.

'I always thought the library held the answers to everything but well now I am not too sure,' Hermione said disappointed.

I looked around to the others who put down their books.

'Professor Chimney did say there wasn't much written about truth-seeking, so maybe this is a wild goose chase,' I said.

'Well, I don't think we should give up. Maybe we are looking too hard, perhaps if we stop looking the answer to what Rebecca could learn to do next will come to us.' Harry said. Hermione didn't look convinced but Ron started to quickly collect up the books. Ginny laughed at him,

'Hey Ron, you don't need telling twice do you?' She said smiling.

'No, come on it is nearly dinner,' Ron said.

We all got up, returned our books to their shelves and walked together to the Great Hall. There were only a handful of students left at Hogwarts. Ginny caught me looking round at the tables that are nearly empty,

'Strange isn't it? There are only a few people left.'

'It's for the best though isn't it? Considering what is happening tomorrow,' I had tried desperately to forget that tomorrow was the day where the protection barriers would come down but it was always at the back of my mind. Ginny squeezed my arm. I smiled at her and we sat down for dinner.

We spent the evening trying to lift our spirits, playing card games and chess with the remainder of the Gryffindors. It was quite late when I found myself yawning,

‘Oh dear, I suppose I should be going to bed,’ I said sleepily and got up slowly.

‘We shall just finish this game and then we shall join you,’ Ginny said looking up from the card game her and Hermione were playing. The others all said goodnight as I walked up to the dormitory. Hermione moved to Ginny and my room shortly after the other three girls in our dormitory had gone home. Our friendships were as strong as they had been before and in some ways even stronger. I hummed to myself as I got ready for bed. I laid down on my bed. I thought about waiting for Ginny and Hermione to come up but in the end my body made up my mind for me as I found I couldn’t keep my eyes open for long.

I was back there, that night when I last saw my father...

‘... Mum please wake up,’ I cried and shook her gently as she sat motionless besides me on the sofa. ‘No, no, no,’ I screamed.

I felt another slap across my face.

‘SHUT UP,’ my father shouted at me.

‘How could you do this? What had she done so wrong?’ I said quietly, my voice breaking.

‘SHUT UP, you stupid girl,’ he pointed the stick at me again and I screamed as a wave of pain hit me.

‘For your information, your mother had served her purpose – she brought you up and now you at an age where you can actually be of some use to me,’ he said. ‘Don’t look so surprised, Rebecca. Even you a stupid muggle can be of use to me, the most powerful wizard alive.’

‘Wizard?’ I managed to whisper.

'Oh yes, wizard, someone able to perform magic, and I do this rather well even if I do say so myself,' he boasted.

I must have looked shocked as he continued, 'don't you believe me? Fine I will show you.' The stick, which I realised must be his wand, was pointed at me again. I felt a sharp pain in my head and all of a sudden images appeared in my mind which I have never seen before. I realised with horror that they are images of my father's previous conquests, those who had been killed. I tried everything that I can think of to stop the images but to no avail. Finally it stopped.

'You killed all those people,' I said quietly.

'Well, yes, although technically I wasn't there at all of them and they didn't all die. Though it was all on my orders,' he replied. 'I could show you more, if you wanted.'

'No,' I screamed.

'Rebecca, sweetie, wake up,' it was Ginny gently shaking my shoulder. I sat up slowly. Hermione and Ginny were either side of my bed and were both looking really concerned.

'Are you ok?' Hermione asked softly.

I nodded, 'I shall just go downstairs for a bit. You can go back to sleep, sorry for waking you up.' I headed towards the door, Ginny started to follow me. 'I just want to be by myself for a bit, I will be fine.'

'I have left something in the Common Room so I shall walk down with you,' Ginny said innocently. I looked at her doubtfully but decided to let her come with me as she was only trying to help. I bit my lip on the way down the stairs. I was disappointed to see Harry and Ron were still up in the Common Room talking. They looked up in surprise when Ginny and I walked in.

'Hey girls, what's going on, I thought you had gone to bed an hour ago?' Harry asked looking at me. I turned towards the door.

'Where are you going?' Ginny asked.

‘Just going to get some fresh air,’ I said. I always felt so closed in after one of my nightmares. I suppose part of it was because I had come so close to being killed by my father that I had nearly not breathed fresh air again.

‘I don’t think that is such a good idea, Professor Dumbledore gave us all strict instructions not to go anywhere on our own and nowhere at all at night,’ Ginny said softly.

I leant my head against the door.

‘What’s wrong, Rebecca?’ Harry asked.

‘Nothing, I am fine,’ I said trying to convince myself more than anything.

‘She had a nightmare, she was screaming,’ Ginny said. ‘It’s over now Rebecca, it was just a dream.’

‘It’s not over though is it? He is out there somewhere probably really close now as the barriers have been taken down. It is only a matter of time before he comes,’ I found myself almost shouting.

‘Was the dream about your mother?’ Harry whispered, he was standing right behind me.

I nodded.

‘Well, Ginny, I think you and I should leave Harry and Rebecca to talk,’ I heard Ron said. ‘No arguing Ginny.’ I heard them walk upstairs to the dormitories. After a few minutes Harry slipped his hand into mine and gently pulled me around to face him, I looked down at the floor.

‘We are all feeling as scared as you are now the protection barriers are down, you won’t be facing him alone,’ Harry said gently.

‘None of us should have to face him, maybe we should have all just run away, go far away. Surely anything would be better than just waiting like this.’

'We, you and I, have to face him again sometime, and we haven't just been waiting we have been preparing.' Harry lead me over to an armchair and I sat down in it, he sat down in the one opposite me.

'You know, I haven't had any nightmares since you closed the connection.'

'I'm glad.'

'My scar hasn't hurt either; you must be a pretty good truth-seeker.'

I smiled, 'well, I have certainly improved since coming here.'

'Can you not stop your own nightmares?'

'No, well there may be a way but I don't know how.'

'Is there a connection between your mind and Voldemort's?'

'I suppose there must be but I wouldn't be able to close it, the connection would be too strong, given that we are related.' Harry looked away at this.

There was silence between us for a few moments.

'So you can see other people's memories?' Harry asked looking thoughtful.

'Yes.'

'Do you think you could block them? Make someone forget something,' Harry continued.

'Sounds possible though I have never tried it, what are you thinking?'

'That... oh I don't know don't worry about it, it's a crazy idea,' he said looking a bit down heartened.

'Please tell me, sometimes the crazier the idea the better,' I said.

'It just came to me that maybe you could block someone's memories of how to do magic, how to use a wand or something like that. Oh forget it, it is stupid.'

'No, Harry, I think you are definitely onto something.'

'You think you could do it?'

'Maybe, but probably only for a few moments, but...'

'That could be enough?'

'Could be, well done Harry,' I smiled warmly. 'So do you want me to try?'

'What now? Shouldn't we be getting some sleep?'

'I don't think I could sleep now, not until I find out if it is possible.'

'I know what you mean.'

'Ok, are you sure this is ok? I cannot guarantee this won't hurt or anything.'

'I trust you, is there anything you want me to do?'

'Not yet, the first time you will be aware of what I am doing, then we shall go from there.'

I looked deep into Harry's eyes and made the connection between our minds. I began searching his mind until I found what I was looking for.

'Ok,' I said to Harry. 'I think I have what I am looking for, what I need you to do is recite something that you have learnt recently, a list or something.'

'Ok.'

'When you are ready just start saying it out loud.'

'Right.'

I heard Harry start to recite something but I couldn't work out exactly what he is saying. Everything going on around me becomes muffled and seemed far away when I was truth-seeking. I turned my attention back to how I am going to block his memories. Before whenever I have wanted to do anything, break a connection or something I had always visualised it I realised. Well that is a start, I thought to myself. Visualise something happening. I looked at the memories, to me they seemed to be arranged in a book. The page was open at what seems to be a list of some potions or spells or something which I guessed was what Harry is reciting. I visualised the page being rubbed out and becoming empty. It takes a lot of energy but when I looked at the memory book again the page is empty. I realised Harry had stopped reciting. The page remained blank for a few minutes before the list slowly appeared again. Satisfied I closed the connection between our minds.

'You did it!' Harry said surprised. 'One minute I knew what I was reciting the next minute it was completely gone, I almost forgot where I was. Are you ok? You look a bit pale.'

'Do I? Something new with my truth-seeking always leaves me a little weak. I will be fine in a few minutes.'

'You want to try again?' Harry asked.

'Yes, if you don't mind. I need to try being invisible next and then after that when you are casting a spell.'

'I like it when you are like this, all fired up about something, your eyes light up.'

'I am just excited I suppose, this is something that could really help.'

After five minutes of recovering, I tried again and this time I made myself invisible so Harry didn't know when it is going to happen. It was a bit hit and miss for the first couple of times but after a number of practices I had it down to a fine art.

'Right, Harry, get your wand out,' I said. 'We need a spell which will freeze me or something, stop me in my tracks or something.'

'I know which one would work, are you sure though? We could just try this in the morning.'

'Sorry to be so blunt but there is a chance that it could be too late in the morning.'

Harry looked down at the floor, but at the same time reached for his wand. He pointed it at me.

'This seems so wrong,' he whispered and I noticed that his hand was shaking slightly.

'It's ok,' I said trying to reassure him. 'If I do this right, the spell won't even reach me, and even if it does it is pretty harmless isn't it?'

'Yes.'

'I trust you, Harry.'

'Ok, in your own time.'

As soon as I heard him begin to say the spell I tried to make the connection between our minds...

'Sorry Rebecca, I must have got you, are you ok?' I opened my eyes to see Harry was looking concerned.

'I think so, that was so strange. I must have been too late. Ok let's try that again.'

This time I watched Harry's body language closely, as soon as I saw him look like he is about to say a spell. I made the connection between our minds and made it invisible. I searched for the memory book and this time the page is open at a different page which has only word written on it, I had no time to read it and instead concentrated on visualising the word being rubbed out. It was about a minute before the word reappears...

'Oh, I'm sorry.' Harry said as I came out of the trance like state which his spell put me in.

'It's ok,' I said and closed the connection.

'You did it, for a whole minute I had no idea what I was about to say.'

'There must be something else I can do as a minute isn't really long enough.' I thought aloud. Suddenly an idea came to me.

'Rebecca? You have thought of something haven't you?' Harry said.

'Yes, hit me again with the same spell.'

That time the process of blocking his memory of the spell seemed to happen much quicker. Knowing that I had only a short time before the spell comes back to him,

'Drop your wand.' I said and hoped it works.

'What?'

'Drop your wand,' I said more forcibly. I heard a muffled clang as Harry dropped his wand. I closed the connection and looked at Harry he was looking confused. I picked up his wand and handed it back to him. I suddenly felt a bit dizzy and so leant my head back onto the chair and closed my eyes.

'That was amazing, if not a little scary, especially when you told me to drop my wand. I didn't even think of questioning you again, it was like I was telling myself to drop the wand.'

'It came back to you quickly though.'

'Yes, when you put the wand in my hand I realised what has just happened, but it is still amazing. I don't think we should try again though, you look exhausted.'

'I am tired, but thank you Harry for letting me experiment,' I got up slowly and we walked up the short flight of stairs together until the staircase splits.

'Night, Rebecca, sleep well.'

'Night, Harry.'

My head felt so heavy as I walked to my dormitory on my own. As I opened the door I heard Ginny and Hermione both quietly snoring. I practically collapsed into bed and closed my eyes.

‘Do you think we should wake her?’ It was Ginny.

‘No, after what Harry has told us, they had a pretty late night,’ I heard Hermione reply.

‘I can hardly believe what Harry told us, it doesn’t seem possible.’

‘What doesn’t seem possible?’ I said sleepily and open my eyes.

‘Oh, sorry we shouldn’t have woken you up.’

‘Well, I am awake now,’ I most definitely was, the sleep that I had got had been deep and without any dreams.

‘Harry told us what happened last night, about how you can make someone forget what spell they were going to cast and drop their wand,’ Ginny said.

‘Oh that,’ I smiled. ‘That was nothing.’

Ginny hugged me tightly, ‘no that is amazing, well done.’

‘Thanks, now I should be getting dressed. Any news?’

‘Nothing has happened yet,’ Hermione said. ‘Ginny’s right it is amazing what you can do.’

I left them in the dormitory to have a shower and got dressed. When I returned we headed down to the Common Room together. It turned out that I had missed breakfast but they had brought some up for me. Harry and Ron and a few others were in the Common Room, when they saw me they all start clapping.

‘Thanks, but it was Harry’s idea,’ I said embarrassed. I ate my breakfast quietly. I found it a bit alarming how all this attention was on me so when I finished I excused myself,

‘Well I am going to have a walk down by the lake.’

‘I shall come with you,’ Harry said. ‘Don’t even try and argue with me, you know what Professor Dumbledore said.’

We walked down the stairs in silence. It was a lovely day outside, and I breathed in the fresh air deeply. We both sat down as we reached the lake.

‘Sorry, that I told everyone, I was just so excited,’ Harry said.

‘You have nothing to be sorry about,’ I replied and laid down on the warm grass.

‘You just looked a bit overwhelmed.’

‘I don’t think I have taken it all in yet.’

We stayed there by the lake for what must have been an hour when,

‘Oh, here you both are.’ I looked up to see Professor Chimney and Professor Dumbledore.

I got up quickly, ‘has something happened?’

‘No, we just heard a rumour about what happened last night, can I have a word with Rebecca alone please Harry?’ Professor Chimney asked.

‘Sure,’ Harry smiled at me and left with Professor Dumbledore. Professor Chimney sat down on the grass and gestured for me to sit as well which I did.

‘Are you angry?’ I asked quietly.

‘Angry? No, just concerned, you haven’t been pushing yourself too far have you?’

‘No, I don’t think so,’ I said relieved that he wasn’t angry.

‘Would you mind trying with me?’

'No, course not,' I said.

'It may be harder then it was with Harry as I am older and more experienced,' he warned.

'Ok,' I said.

'Ready?' Professor Chimney asked, pulling out his wand. I didn't reply though as I was busy making the connection between our minds. I looked for his memory book concerning spells and only glanced at it before visualising it being rubbed out. I realised that Professor Chimney was right, I found it much harder to rub out the word but eventually it is done.

'Drop your wand,' I said firmly.

I closed the connection and then looking I realised to my surprise that Professor Chimney had actually dropped his wand. I picked it up and gave it back to him. He looked at me and smiled. My head was spinning so I laid back on the grass.

'That is some party trick you have there.'

'Why, thank you. I would bow but I am feeling a little dizzy.'

'You never fail to amaze me.'

'I surprise myself too.'

The Battle

'Hello.' I looked around and to my surprise and horror, I saw Voldemort, I had stopped thinking of him as my father. He was standing with a tall man with long blond hair and none other than Draco Malfoy. I looked around desperately, but it was so early in the morning that the grounds are deserted. It had been nearly two weeks since the protection barriers were lifted. Two anxious weeks we had all spent just waiting for this to happen. Witches and wizards from the Order of the Phoenix had been gathered at Hogwarts in anticipation of Voldemort's attack. It had given me time to improve and practice my truth-seeking especially blocking the memories of how to do magic. I felt refreshed though today as Professor Chimney had strictly banned me from practising at all yesterday.

'Don't even think about trying to get away, Rebecca dear.'

'So you are here then.' I said trying to seem braver than I am actually feeling.

'Obviously. I understand that you know Draco, while this is his father, one of my most loyal followers.'

Right, Rebecca, try and distract him while you contact someone I thought to myself.

'It's been a while, Dad.' I said. I struggled to say Dad but was pleased with the confused expression on his face which he quickly covered up. 'The last time we saw each other must have been... oh the night Mum died.' I turned away and looked at the lake. I quickly made the connection to Professor Chimney's mind.

'Sir? Please wake up. Please.'

'Rebecca? What is it?'

'I am down by the lake with Voldemort, Draco Malfoy and his father I don't know what they have planned,' I said quickly.

'Why are you alone Rebecca? I thought Professor Dumbledore and I made ourselves perfectly clear that you weren't supposed to go anywhere on our own,' Professor Chimney replied.

'Well it is too late now. I just thought I should let you know. Maybe you shouldn't come rushing out here as then he would know that I have contacted you and may realise that I have developed my truth-seeking skills somewhat. I shall let you know if something more happens.'

'Right, ok. I shall alert everyone else. Don't hesitate to contact me again.'

'What are you doing, enjoying your last moments of freedom?' I forced myself to turn back to face Voldemort who had just spoken.

'Lucius, take Rebecca away to where we agreed,' he ordered. The senior Malfoy grabbed me roughly on my arm and started to drag me towards the main school building. Draco followed us but my father remained by the lake. Once inside the building we walked down a corridor which I had never seen before. We came to a room which Mr Malfoy unlocked and practically threw me into. I landed on my hands and knees on the dusty wooden floor. I looked around; the room seemed to be some kind of store room, which judging by the thick layer of dust which was on the top of everything, hadn't been used for years. I leant against a wall and put my head in my arms, which gave me the opportunity to contact Professor Chimney again,

'Hello, I am in a room somewhere in the castle, some kind of store room. Voldemort stayed by the lake,' I said quickly.

'Ok, how are you holding up?' Professor Chimney asked.

'I'm ok at the moment,' I replied.

'Everyone is aware of the situation, we are just waiting for him to make the first move.'

'Oh ok.'

‘Take care, Rebecca.’ I closed the connection between our minds and looked over to Draco and his father.

‘Draco, keep an eye on her, it may be better if you lock yourselves in. I have a key of my own,’ Mr Malfoy said and handed Draco a set of keys. Mr Malfoy left the room and Draco locked it behind him and sat down in front of the door. It all seemed so quiet, I wondered what was going on around us, how everyone else was feeling. We all knew this was inevitable but part of me really couldn’t take it in that he was here. What was he planning? It made sense for Voldemort to get me out of the way first. It was so weird seeing him again, he seemed so human, in my nightmares he had become this monster. I suppose he was a monster, but in reality he looked more vulnerable than I thought.

I lost track of how long Draco and I spent in the room alone. It felt like hours but in reality cannot have been more than one when Draco finally broke the silence between us,

‘You are acting differently to what I expected,’ he said and looked slightly confused.

‘What did you expect?’ I replied quietly.

‘Well, put up a bit more of a fight, I suppose.’

‘Fight? With what? I am a muggle, I am unable to do magic.’

‘Oh, of course, that always seemed strange to me that you, the daughter of such a powerful wizard have no magical powers whatsoever. He must have been so disappointed.’

‘I suppose he was, but he wasn’t really around that much as I was growing up. Apparently regaining his strength and plotting on killing his enemies was so much more important than looking after his wife and daughter.’

‘How about you? Do you wish you could do magic?’

I thought about his question, I had often found myself wondering about whether I did wish I could do magic. Truth-seeking is classed by most as a magical power but if Draco didn’t know that I could do it

I wasn't going to enlighten him now. But what about magic, with a wand?

'Truth be told, no. I am proud to be a muggle.'

Draco scoffed at this and I looked away from him. I had seen so many people be hurt through my father's use of magic that I knew that I didn't want to be associated with it. I did feel vulnerable sometimes surrounded by witches and wizards and especially with my truth-seeking but I had overcome so much of the disadvantages I had first felt at being unable to cast magic.

'I wonder what is happening.' Draco said.

'You don't know?'

'No, my father only told me what I needed to know.'

I reached out again to Professor Chimney's mind. I sensed that he is in pain.

'What is happening?' I asked.

'Rebecca? How are you?'

'I'm fine, just locked in a room with Draco Malfoy. What is going on? You are hurt.'

'Oh, you can feel that can you, well don't worry about me, I will be fine. Keep yourself safe Rebecca.'

'But I should be helping...'

'All I want you to do is keep yourself safe.'

Slightly frustrated I closed the connection. I blinked my eyes slowly to find Draco towering over me with his wand pointed at me,

'What were you doing?' He asked.

'Nothing,' I said desperately, I had forgotten that my facial expressions changed when I truth sought.

‘You looked a million miles away.’

‘Wish I was.’

Draco seemed satisfied and sat back down by the door.

‘Aren’t you going to try and escape?’ Draco asked.

‘No, it would be pointless, you have the keys and a wand and I have nothing.’ This wasn’t technically true but I knew it would be foolish to try and something told me that I should conserve my energy.

‘Well, you could try and talk me round.’

I was taken aback by this, ‘why? Do you want me to?’

Draco didn’t answer immediately, ‘I thought you would try and tell me that what I was doing was wrong and that I should change sides and fight alongside you against our fathers.’

‘Well it seems to me that you have already made your decision which I did say was yours to make,’ I said still slightly surprised.

Draco was clearly annoyed by my answer and stood up again and walked over to me, ‘why are you being like this?’

‘Like what?’

‘You just seem so accepting of what is happening. You do realise that our fathers are out there somewhere probably killing anyone and everyone that gets in their way.’

I looked away, of course I had realised I was just trying not to think about it all that much. There wasn’t that much I could do from here, I just had to wait and see what happens.

‘Well, we all knew that he would come, especially after the protection barriers were taken down,’ I said quietly.

‘Yes, that certainly made it easier,’ Draco said, I sensed a slightly bitter tone to his voice. He sat back down and sighed, ‘ok I admit it, there is a part of me that really wants you to challenge me and my

decision. I realised when we met in the hospital wing that we have quite a lot in common except from which side we are fighting for.'

'You got that right. Draco, Look, I am not going to try and persuade you to change sides. You have made your decision and you probably had your own good reasons for making that decision. All I will say is that if you are having doubts then it is never too late to change sides,' I said.

'Doubts? What do you mean?' Draco raised his voice.

'Ok, I only meant that you may be having doubts, doesn't everyone have them after making a big decision?'

'Not me,' Draco said though I was not entirely convinced by his answer.

There is a key being turned in the lock, Draco stood up quickly. The door opened and Mr Malfoy walks in looking a bit worse for wear.

'Father? What is happening?' Draco asked.

'They are certainly putting up a fight,' his father spat out. 'I have been meaning to check on you for a while but I had to kill a few people first.'

I found myself gasping out loud at how coldly he said this like killing someone was just a bit of a chore.

'Oh, does that shock you, Rebecca?' Mr Malfoy turned to me and stared at me. 'Draco, perform the Cruciatus curse on Rebecca.'

'Father?' Draco asked shocked.

'Don't question me, boy. Just do it. The Dark Lord wishes to know what part she is to play in their defence. I know you can cast the spell.'

'But...' Draco paused, obviously feeling the doubts that he was so eager to deny that he had.

'I said, don't question me. Fine, I will do it. They do say don't send a boy to do a man's job don't they? Cruccio!'

It happened so quickly that I didn't have time to try and stop him. The pain that hit me was so intense, worse then whenever I was truth-seeking with Professor Chimney. I tried desperately to think about something else to distract myself but I couldn't help but scream out in pain.

'Now, you don't want that to happen again, do you? So tell me, what is your role here?'

'What role? I don't know what you are talking about,' I whispered from my curled up position on the floor. He placed the Cruciatus curse on me again. I was unable to stop him as I was unable to see it coming and besides I felt too weak. I was sure that the second time the pain was much worse, though I didn't know how that was possible. When it was over, I realised that I needed to buy myself some time to recover so I could stop it happening again. So, despite my body protesting and rather loudly at that, I slowly stood up. My head was throbbing and when I looked down I noticed my hands are shaking.

'Oh, changed your mind then, are you going to tell me what Dumbledore has planned for you to do?'

'There is no plan, didn't you know I am a muggle? What use would I be in a magical battle?' I said bravely. I was starting to feel a bit stronger.

'Oh I did know that you are a muggle, but your father tells me that you are no ordinary muggle, that you are a truth-seeker.'

'She's a truth-seeker? But how, she's a muggle and doesn't truth-seeking take years and years to master?' Draco asked.

'It does unless you are born with the ability which Rebecca was, weren't you dear?' Mr Malfoy said bitterly.

'I certainly was,' I said proudly.

‘And no doubt Dumbledore has been helping you to improve your skills.’

‘Well, not actually Dumbledore, but a Professor Chimney has been teaching me.’

‘For how long?’

‘Shortly after I started at Hogwarts.’

‘Several months then, well you must be quite good then.’

‘Well, everyone tells me that I am.’ I said boldly feeling strong enough to fight anything that he could throw at me. I made the connection with his mind and made it invisible even before he drew his wand, no doubt about to hit me with the Cruciatus curse again. I found his memory book and visualised rubbing out the spell that is written down. I found it much harder then whenever I had done it before.

‘Drop your wand!’ I shouted in his mind. Hearing nothing I repeated my demand again and satisfied with the sound of his wand hitting the hard wooden floor. I quickly closed the connection, picked up his wand from the floor. I walked calmly over to the small window, open it and threw the wand out of it. Mr Malfoy obviously regained his memory and began to say the spell when he realised that his wand was no longer in his hand. He looked confused.

‘Have you lost something?’ I smiled, despite everything I was slightly proud of myself for what I had done. Both of the Malfoys were staring at me in shock.

‘You little... Draco your wand.’ Oh, I thought to myself I hadn’t thought of that, I didn’t know if I could do it again so soon but I realised that Draco was not forthcoming in giving his father his wand. The elder Malfoy was clearly annoyed,

‘What are you smiling at?’ He slapped me around the face. I was not expecting it so fell to the floor. He kicked me in the stomach. I cried out in pain. ‘I shall just have to kill you the muggle way then won’t I?’ Another few kicks.

‘STOP!’ Draco shouted. Mr Malfoy paused. I looked over, Draco was pointing his wand at his father. I noticed that his hand was shaking.

‘What are you going to do to stop me?’ Mr Malfoy said and pulled out a knife from his cloak. My eyes widened as he knelt down besides me, he leant on me so I was unable to move my arms and holding my face in his free hand pressed my head into the ground. I closed my eyes as I saw the knife coming towards me but he only scratched my cheek which I felt start to bleed.

‘I SAID STOP IT! DON’T HURT HER!’

‘Well, you are going to have to stop me, son.’

‘AVADA KEDAVRA!’ A green light emerged from Draco’s wand. His father fell onto me. Realising that he was dead I pushed him off me and stood up slowly. I had to grip the wall as I stood as I felt dizzy and slightly sick. I headed towards the door.

‘Where are you going?’ Draco asked quietly.

‘I am going to go and help the others. You can stay here if you want,’ I said.

Draco shook his head. I gently took one of his hands and lead him out of the door. We started to walk back the way we had come.

‘You are shaking,’ Draco said simply.

‘I think you will find that you are shaking as well. Thanks for what you did back there, I know it must have been hard for you,’ I said gently. Draco was looking very pale and hardly seemed able to walk.

‘He was going to kill you. Are you ok? He must have hurt you.’ Draco said looking at my cheek.

‘I’m fine, it is just a scratch. Ok,’ I said as we reached the door that we had come in. It seemed so long ago. ‘We need to find out where they are. Give me a second.’ I let go of Draco’s hand and made the connection to Professor Chimney, I could sense that he was really hurting now.

'Where are you?'

'We are in the Great Hall. Are you free? Only I am starting to think that we could really do with your help after all,' he said, he sounded much weaker than he normally did.

'I am on my way,' I closed the connection.

'Were you truth-seeking?' Draco asked.

'Yes, they are in the Great Hall,' I said and started running in the direction of the Great Hall. I heard Draco running behind me. We reached the doors to the Great Hall and I took a deep breath before opening the doors. The sight that greeted us was not a pleasant one. All around the hall there were people fighting each other, throwing spells at each other with an alarming speed. They were a few bodies on the ground.

'Well, well, well, if it isn't my daughter Rebecca?' I looked over to where the voice was coming from. Voldemort was sitting on the platform where the teachers normally sat. There was no one challenging him, I wondered why for a moment until I realised that the way up to him was being blocked by a number of death eaters. Each of them was involved in a battle. I looked around the room and saw Harry, Hermione and Ginny were all deep in battle, they looked exhausted though especially Harry.

'Come here, Rebecca,' Voldemort ordered me. I started to walk towards him, thinking about what I could do to help. 'It is about time you got here, your friends are starting to struggle. I though have been saving myself for this.' He called out loudly, 'no one else is allowed to harm her.' Before I knew it he pointed his wand at me, 'entrio tetera.'

I found myself falling to the floor, the pain was so intense.

'Go on then show me what you can do,' came a voice and I realised with a sinking feeling that I had to show him what I am capable of which I hadn't really planned on so early on. I gritted my teeth and found the connection between our minds. It seemed so strong, almost as strong as a connection that I would make, but I did manage to

break it. I screamed as another wave of pain hit me. I heard someone clapping,

‘Very good, they have obviously taught you well.’

I saw a hand reaching for mine to help me up. I stood up slowly, my head was throbbing. It was Draco who has helped me stand up.

‘What is this? Have you changed sides, Draco? To the side that is destined to lose? Your father will be so disappointed in you.’

‘My father is dead,’ Draco said coldly.

I quickly made the connection with Voldemort’s mind, realising what he was about to do. Looking at his memory book I was not surprised to see the words, Avada Kedavra. I rubbed them out quickly. I didn’t risk asking him to drop his wand. I closed the connection, to hear Draco,

‘EXPELLIARMUS.’ Voldemort dropped his wand, he looked disturbed for a second but picked it up.

‘Well, well, I think I underestimated what you were capable of. Your mother would be so proud. Entrerio tetera.’

I screamed as the wave of pain hit me. I fell to the floor on my knees.

‘Have you had enough, Rebecca?’

I found myself nodding.

‘Give up then.’

‘Rebecca, can you hear me? It’s me, Professor Chimney, you need to fight him Rebecca like you did before.’

‘I can’t,’ I said out loud.

‘Rebecca, stay with us,’ Professor Chimney said. ‘Break the connection, I know you can do it.’

‘Just close your eyes, Rebecca, and the pain will go away. You have put up a good fight. I say it again your mother will be so proud,’ Voldemort said in my head.

Mum, I thought, she wouldn’t want me to give up. I gritted my teeth and broke the connection. It was much harder the second time and I think I passed out for a few seconds. I looked up to see Voldemort pointing his wand at me again, I hid my face.

‘Stop this, Tom,’ it was Professor Dumbledore he had stepped in front of me. ‘She is defenceless.’

Voldemort acted quickly, I tried to make the connection with his mind and stop him but I was too late.

‘AVADA KEDAVRA.’ Professor Dumbledore slumped in front of me. I stopped myself from crying out. Instead, I made different connections to Harry’s, Draco’s, Professor Chimney’s and the other remaining people on our side.

‘Right everyone, I have had enough, next time he casts a spell, I am going to try and block his memories. When he drops his wand that is when I want you all to strike, in unison.’

‘Are you sure you are up to it?’ I heard Harry asked.

‘Yes, just be careful that the people fighting you don’t take advantage of you being distracted,’ I replied.

‘I suggest using a stunning spell, it will hold them off for a few seconds, good luck Rebecca,’ Professor Chimney said

‘Thanks, well here goes nothing,’ I closed the different connections.

I stood up slowly. Voldemort seemed surprised to see me still alive, ‘oh do you want some more? Fine, entrerio tetra.’

I did my best to ignore the pain and looked for the connection but instead of breaking it, I used it to enter his mind. I found his memory book and rubbed out the spell that was written on the page.

‘DROP YOUR WAND!’ I shouted.

‘What are you doing? How?’

‘Don’t underestimate me, DROP YOUR WAND!’

‘My own daughter bringing my downfall, you don’t have much family loyalty do you? Very well though, Rebecca but in return for Harry’s life I will take yours.’

I expected something to happen at these words but was surprised when I heard a wand hit the floor. I closed the connection quickly even though this caused me more pain and heard several voices shout,

‘AVADA KEDAVRA!’

My father fell to the floor. I heard Harry ask,

‘Is he dead?’

‘I think so,’ came Professor McGonagall’s voice. I looked up as she performed a spell on the remaining Death Eaters which made them slump on the floor.

‘But, I didn’t think it was possible for him to be killed,’ Harry said clearly bewildered by what has just happened.

‘Everyone is mortal, Harry. Our combined efforts were unexpected and killed him,’ it was Professor Chimney. ‘Rebecca, it’s ok, close your eyes now sweetie. It is over now and you need to rest.’

A/N – Well that was my version of the ‘Last Battle.’ I did have second thoughts about actually writing it as I know that whatever the amazing J.K Rowling will write will make my efforts seem very lame but it had to happen. Anyway let me know what you think by reviewing.

Moving on

I asked the man in the ticket office when the next train to London was. He said it would come in exactly seven minutes and twenty-three seconds. I was surprised at his exact answer but reminded myself that I was not yet back in the land of muggles where trains had a reputation of running late. I checked my pocket for the hundredth time, yes the keys were still there. The keys that offered a solution to my problem about what to do next, I found them amongst my things from home that Dumbledore gave me. Home, I smiled to myself, soon I would be home. I know it won't be the same without Mum but at least I wouldn't have to worry about Voldemort, magic, truth-seeking or anything else. My head was still throbbing from the final 'battle', the battle to end all battles. I hadn't told anyone about it, I didn't want to make a fuss not when there were so many other people that were in a worse state than me. I had just had the cut on my face mended and now no one would even know that it had happened. I sat down on the bench and read the note again that had been with the keys.

Dear Rebecca,

Enclosed are your keys to your home you shared with your mother. I placed a spell on your house that makes passer-bys forget it was there – all they see is a patch of grass. You will be able to see the house though even while those around you are unable to see it. The spell will be broken when you place your key in the door.

Professor Dumbledore

My eyes faltered on the last word. I can't believe that Professor Dumbledore was dead.

'Rebecca! What are you doing here?' I looked up and to my surprise Draco Malfoy was standing in front of me with his trunk at his feet.

'Draco, I could ask the same of you.'

'I have more reason than you for running away, well that is what you are doing here isn't it running away. I thought you would be celebrating with Harry or something.'

I looked away from Draco and down at the floor.

‘Or maybe not, do you want to talk about it?’ Draco asked softly.

‘Not really, you?’

‘No, let’s make a pact not to talk about what happened up there.’ Draco said gesturing his head in the direction of Hogwarts. ‘Well, at least at not until we are ready.’

‘A pact?’ I asked slightly confused.

‘Is it too hard to believe that we could make a pact and heaven forbid could even become friends.’ Draco said becoming slightly angry.

‘Sorry.’ I said and stood up and offered out my hand. Draco looked at it curiously. ‘Let’s shake on it,’ I explained.

Draco shook my hand. We looked at each other for a while, interrupted by the train arriving.

‘Oh, it is early.’ I said surprised. We both gathered up our trunks and headed for a carriage. Draco took my trunk from me and placed it on the train. I paused before entering the train.

‘Rebecca? You can change your mind.’ Draco said.

‘No,’ I said firmly. ‘No looking back.’ I entered the carriage and sat down. The train started to move.

‘How are you anyway Rebecca?’ Draco asked.

‘I’m ok, a little overwhelmed.’

‘Are you sure?’

I looked at him and considered him. He was a graceful boy, almost a man I suppose, tall with very light blonde hair and grey eyes. Eyes that were looking at me with concern in them.

‘Well, apart from the obvious, yes I am fine.’

Draco stood up to close the window of the train and paused as he looked out at the countryside.

‘Well, don’t take this the wrong way but you look awful.’

‘Thanks.’ I said.

‘Seriously, Rebecca, when was the last time you had something to eat or had some sleep?’

I thought about this and replied, ‘I don’t really remember.’

‘Well we shall have to do something about that. You stay here and I shall go and hunt down some food.’

‘Thanks.’

A few minutes later, Draco returned with a large tray full of food. We ate in silence. I looked out of the window at the countryside, we were getting closer to London and further away from Hogwarts. Once I had finished eating I turned to Draco,

‘So what are you going to do next?’

Draco looked thoughtful, ‘I have to admit that I didn’t really think beyond getting away from that place.’

A thought came into my head, ‘you could always stay with me for a while until you know what to do next. Professor Dumbledore left me the keys to my house, in London, where I lived with my Mum.’ Draco looked surprised. I continued, ‘You don’t have to, I mean it was only an idea. You must have other wizard friends to go to rather than stay with a muggle.’

Draco stood up clearly annoyed, ‘why would you say that? I don’t think like that about muggles anymore. Surely what happened back there shows that.’

‘Sorry,’ I said quietly. ‘I wasn’t thinking.’

After a few moments of awkward silence.

‘No, I am sorry.’ Draco said sitting down. ‘You are justified in thinking that. At Hogwarts I had a reputation of hating muggles and anyone that wasn’t completely pure blood. A reputation that clung to me even when I started to feel differently, that maybe what my father and mother had taught me my whole life could be wrong. The truth is I was surprised by your offer but if you don’t mind I would like to take you up on it.’ Draco moved to sit next to me.

‘You will be very welcome at my home. I mean it isn’t much but well it is a start isn’t it?’

Draco nodded.

‘Hey, sleepyhead, we are here.’

I must have fallen asleep as I woke up with my head in Draco’s lap.

‘Oh sorry,’ I said. ‘I must have fallen asleep. You could have moved me. It must have been very uncomfortable.’

‘No, I wasn’t uncomfortable. You looked so peaceful in your sleep I didn’t want to wake you.’ Draco said as he reached out and rearranged a piece of my hair that had come out of place. We looked at each other for a moment. The train stopped and I stood up and get my trunk down. Draco did the same. We got out of the carriage and onto the bustling 9 and $\frac{3}{4}$ ’s station in London.

‘Where now?’ Draco asked putting our trunks onto a trolley.

‘I’m not sure. I think we need to find the way through to the muggle train station.’

‘You don’t know where that is?’ Draco asked.

‘No, when I came to Hogwarts, I didn’t come by train.’

‘Well it is lucky that we met at the train station. Follow me.’

I followed Draco and he stopped in front of a brick wall.

‘We need to go through this wall.’ Draco said turning to me.

‘Go through the wall? But it’s a wall.’ I protested and Draco took a few steps back and ran at the wall. I was about to cry out when he disappeared through the wall. Thinking to myself that I must be mad to do what Draco had done, I took a run up and a leap of faith and ran at the wall. I braced myself for the expected impact of the wall and closed my eyes but the impact did not happen and I felt a rush of air on my face, I opened my eyes and the first thing I saw was Draco laughing at me.

‘What are you laughing at?’ I asked smiling.

‘Nothing.’ Draco said and tried to look innocent.

I looked around, the station is bustling with people going about their day-to-day business.’

‘It’s strange isn’t it?’ I said thinking.

‘What’s strange? The muggles? Well yes I have always found you to be a rather strange group of people.’ Draco replied smiling.

I playfully hit him on the arm. ‘No, I mean here it’s like nothings happened, when back there, there has been a battle to end all battles and there was a chance the evil side could have won and they just carry on oblivious.’

Draco gently touched my shoulder.

‘Sorry,’ I said.

We stood there looking at the people for a while. I turned to Draco, ‘right, shall we go?’

‘Sure, lead the way.’

‘We have to go on the underground, I think it’s this way.’ I said and headed off for the underground station. I realised before we get there that we will need some money for the tickets and headed over to a cash machine. I reached for my purse in my handbag and pulled out

my bank card. I put in the machine, typed in my pin number and choose to withdraw some money. As the machine processed my information, I turned around. Draco was looking at the machine with a bemused expression.

‘Oh sorry, it’s a cash machine for some money to buy us tickets for the underground.’

The machine released my card, ‘this is my bank card I can put in a machine, type in a four digit number and then I can get some money.’ On cue some money came out of the machine and I placed the money and my card into my purse and placed it back in my handbag.

‘Oh, I see,’ said Draco clearly fascinated.

‘Ok, the underground station is just down those stairs. Stairs... Oh’

‘Oh, what?’ Draco asked.

‘The stairs, we won’t be able to take the trolley down the stairs and the trunks are so awkward. I wish they had wheels.’

‘Your wish is my command.’ Draco said, pulling out his wand from the pocket of his jeans, pointed it at the trunks and said a spell under his breath. The trunks seemed to grow wheels.

‘Draco!’ I exclaimed, looking around me to see if anyone had seen. When I was satisfied that no one had seen I turned back to Draco.

‘I know brilliant aren’t I?’

‘Yes, I’m sure you are but Draco, this is a muggle train station, we are surrounded by muggles, don’t you think they would be a little alarmed if they saw a trunk grow wheels?’

Draco looked embarrassed and looked at the floor. ‘Sorry I didn’t think,’ he whispered.

‘It’s ok, I don’t think anybody saw and the trunks will be easier now.’ I said as I took them off the trolley. Draco followed me to the steps down to the underground station. I walked over to a ticket booth and

purchased two tickets for the underground and walked over to the barriers. I caught Draco looking bewildered again and whispered, 'just follow me.'

We made it through the barriers and I lead the way to the correct station.

'The train will only be a few minutes and then it's a few stops to where I live. My house is only a short walk away from the station.'

'Have you always lived in London?' Draco asked.

'Yes,' I replied. 'Mum always wanted to move away from London to somewhere by the sea, but it never happened. Where did you live?'

'The manor was in the middle of muggle countryside, hidden from view,' Draco said somewhat sadly.

The train arrived and we clambered on. The journey only took about ten minutes.

'Right we are here.' I said and we climbed off the train.

'Here we are,' I said as I paused outside my house. I had to remind myself that things had changed and most importantly my mother would not be here anymore.

'And where are we exactly?' Draco asked.

'This is my house, I know it isn't much ...'

'Much? Rebecca I hate to break it to you but it seems like your house is nothing, just a piece of waste land.'

'Oh,' I said surprised and then realised. 'The spell, wait a minute.' I walked up to the door and put the key into the lock and opened the door. 'Well are you coming in or are you happy there staring at my house looking like your jaw has hit the floor?'

'That is so weird,' Draco said as he followed me into the hall.

The smell of my house hit me and it really felt like I have never been away.

‘Ok, quick tour. This obviously is the hallway, through this door is the lounge come dining room and that door at the end is the kitchen. The door behind you is the downstairs loo. Upstairs are two bedrooms and a bathroom which feel free to use if you want to freshen up or something. I’m going to see if there is anything edible in the kitchen.’

‘Ok, thanks,’ Draco said and headed upstairs. I took a deep breath and opened the door to the kitchen, what struck me was how clean it seemed, you would think that after nearly a year there would be more dust, most be something to do with the spell I thought to myself as I looked in the cupboards and then in the fridge and the freezer. I was really surprised to see that they were all pretty well stocked. I turned on the oven and got out a frozen pizza and some chips and I was just putting them on a baking tray when Draco came in. I have to admit that it felt a bit weird to have him in my house but then the last year has been pretty crazy.

‘I thought we could have pizza and chips for dinner, I know it’s pretty simple but cooking was never one of my talents, I shall just put everything in the oven and it should be ready in half an hour or so,’ I said opening the oven and placed the baking tray and pizza inside. Draco looked bemused so I continued ‘more crazy muggle contraptions I am afraid. That is an oven – it warms things up, this is the fridge it keeps things cool, the freezer is even colder and then the microwave is over there it warms things up quicker than an oven, what else? Oh the kettle boils water and that’s a dishwasher for cleaning plates and glasses.’

‘Your kitchen certainly doesn’t look like what mine did at home, not that I was in there very often. All of our meals were made for us by house elves and then brought to the dining room,’ Draco looked thoughtful.

‘Well I am going to see if the tv still works.’ I said and opened the lounge door. I turned on the tv and sat down on the sofa with the remote, ‘oh yes it does work. Everything seems to be in such good working order though there is one thing missing...’

‘What’s that?’ Draco had followed me into the lounge and sat down in an armchair and couldn’t seem to take his eyes off the tv set.

‘There doesn’t seem to be any post, but then I suppose if only I could see the house that makes the postman’s job very hard.’

‘Is this what muggles do for entertainment? Watch a screen like this all day?’ Draco said still in shock.

‘Pretty much, here have the remote and flick through the channels,’ I said passing the remote control.

‘No wonder muggles are so stupid,’ I looked at him. ‘Present company excluded of course.’

‘Muggles aren’t more stupid than wizards and witches you know they are just different.’

‘With rather odd gadgets,’ Draco said smiling.

‘Oh and I suppose waving some branch around and calling it a wand is perfectly normal,’ I said smiling as well.

‘Of course,’ Draco put down the remote having settled on a channel which seemed to be showing a tea-time soap. ‘Have you lived here all your life?’

‘Yes, it feels strange in a way to be back here but like I have never been away at the same time if that makes any sense? I almost expect Mum to walk through the door at any moment and ask me how my day at school was like and what I would like for dinner. Everything seems so untouched, just as it was when I left it.’

‘So it was just you and your Mum then?’

‘Yes, when I was younger I used to beg for a younger brother or sister preferably a sister who I could play with or generally just boss around but as I grew older Mum and I became really close and it didn’t seem to matter that it was just us. Are you an only child?’

‘Yes.’

'Did you have a happy childhood?'

'Umm, not really, I mean you have met my father and my mother well wasn't much better. Mostly I was left with a house elf or my nanny.'

'Where is your mother now?' I asked carefully.

'I don't know, have tried not to think about it really. Suppose she could be in Azkaban, the prison for magical people, or dead. I changed sides though so I expect she wouldn't want to have anything to do with me,' Draco looked down at the floor.

'Sorry for being so nosy.'

'It's ok, it just feels a bit...'

'Raw, a bit too painful at the moment.'

Draco nodded.

'I should probably check on the dinner, I shall be having some tinned spaghetti, would you like some as well?'

'Sounds great, would you like any help?'

'No I should be fine.'

I served up dinner about fifteen minutes later, we ate on the dining table with the tv still on in the background. We both ate everything on our plates.

'I thought you said you couldn't cook, that was delicious.'

'It wasn't bad was it? I shall put all this all the dishwasher and then if you don't mind I think I will have a bath.'

'Do you need any help?'

'No, just relax in front of the tv.'

I had a long relaxing bath and decided to change into my pjs as it would probably be an early night tonight. I also took some painkillers

to try and take the edge off my thumping headache. I found myself pausing in front of Mum's room but I couldn't seem to make myself actually open the door and go in. Instead I returned to my room and put on my dressing gown and headed downstairs. Draco had fallen asleep on the armchair, I thought about leaving him there but it wasn't the most comfortable armchair so,

'Draco?' I shook his shoulder gently. He woke up with a start and looked confused until he remembered where he is. 'Sorry, I couldn't leave you to sleep in the armchair it is so uncomfortable after a while. Do you want a hot chocolate or something?'

'That sounds lovely,' Draco said between yawns.

A few minutes later I returned with two steaming cups of hot chocolate.

'Careful, they are probably a bit too hot to drink at the moment,' I said and placed them down on the coffee table. I drew the curtains in the room.

'Thanks for this,' Draco said.

'What? The hot chocolate?'

'No, everything, taking me in like this. I promise to be out of your hair as soon as I find an alternative.'

'Feel free to stay as long as you want.'

'I don't mean to sound ungrateful but where am I going to sleep?'

'Oh, some hostess I am I hadn't even really thought about it.'

'I don't mind, I could sleep down here on the sofa.'

'What with all the bumps? There is always Mum's room...' I say and looked down at the floor.

'Which I would be even more uncomfortable sleeping in then the sofa.'

With a small sigh of relief I came across the perfect solution, 'why didn't I think of it before? There is a pull out bed under my bed, it's a bit too heavy to move anywhere so I am afraid that you will have to share with me, if that's ok?'

'Sounds fine, you don't snore do you?'

'I don't think so. I think I shall head up to bed now and make up your bed for you. It has been a long day.'

'Certainly has. I shall come up with you and help you with our trunks.'

I walked round the downstairs of the house and turned off the lights and we headed upstairs together.

Coming to terms with the truth

I woke up with the sun streaming through the window. I looked over to see Draco was still asleep, I looked at the time and saw that it is already half ten. I got up and decided to have to have a quick shower and head downstairs, I let Draco carry on sleeping as he probably needed it. Again I found myself pausing outside of my Mum's room but this time I forced myself to open the door and go in. The first thing that I am hit with is the smell, I breathed it in deeply it is like she is standing right next to me. I sat down on her bed and looked around the room. All of sudden my vision becomes blurry as I began to cry. I curled up on the bed and hugged one of the pillows which smelt so much like her. I laid there for a while and eventually heard Draco going into the bathroom for a shower. I sat up and splashed my face with some water from the sink in my Mum's ensuite and walked downstairs. I put the kettle on and collecting the hot chocolate mugs from last night put them in the dishwasher. I decided to put the radio on and help myself to some bread from the freezer and put it in the toaster. I was humming along to a familiar song on the radio when Draco appeared.

'Morning,' I said with a smile. 'How did you sleep? Would you like some toast and a cup of tea?'

'I slept really well thank you and I would like some toast and some tea would be great.'

I handed him some toast and put some more in the toaster. Draco sat down at the small kitchen table. I handed him a mug of tea and then when my toast was ready sat down at the table opposite him.

'How did you sleep?' Draco asked.

'Not too badly, I had a nightmare though, I suppose it is being back here,' I said quietly.

'Yes, it must be hard for you.'

Our conversation was interrupted by the sound of the letterbox. Surprised, I got up and walked to the front door. There was a single letter on the door mat. I looked at the address,

*Miss R. Jones,
412, Esther Place,
South London.
SE1 2EW*

I started opening it as I walked back to the kitchen bemused.

'It's a letter addressed to me,' I explained to Draco and sitting back down at the table unfolded the letter.

*Sweet and Co. Lawyers,
114, Thames Street,
Central London.
CE1 4TS.*

Dear Miss Jones,

As you are reading this letter it means that you must have returned home, I do hope you are well. I am your late mother's lawyer and would like to see you as soon as possible to settle some things. Please telephone my secretary to arrange an appointment at your earliest convenience on this number 020 123 456 789.

Yours truly,

Benjamin Sweet

I passed it over to Draco to read.

'How did they know I was here? I mean we only got here yesterday,' I said thinking aloud.

'Maybe it is something to do with the spell that Professor Dumbledore used,' Draco said and placed the letter carefully on the table.

'Well I suppose I should ring them, get it over and done with,' I paused though before reaching for the phone. I had always hated using the phone, I used to worry about it so much that often Mum would give in and ring for me. I was not really that surprised when I heard a dialling tone, like everything else it is working perfectly. Draco excused himself and cleared the table of the breakfast things. I dialled the number carefully and took deep breaths as I wait for an answer,

'Sweet and Co. Lawyers, Mrs Penny speaking how may I help you?'

'Hello... eh...' I said stuttering a bit then taking a deep breath continued, 'hello my name is Rebecca Jones, I received a letter this morning asking me to ring this number as soon as possible.'

'Oh, Miss Jones, it is good to hear from you. How are you?'

'I am fine, thank you.'

'I suppose you must be a little surprised about the letter, but it is better explained in person, I shall arrange for an appointment for you to see Mr Sweet. He has been most anxious to hear from you. Would this afternoon be convenient?'

'This afternoon? Yes that sounds fine.'

'Well Mr Sweet will be free to see you from 2pm. Do you know where we are?'

'I think so, are you just off Oxford Street?'

'Yes, if you get the tube to Oxford Street Station it is just a short walk from the station.'

'Ok.'

'Great, looking forward to meeting you.'

'Thanks, bye,' I put down the phone.

'Is everything ok?' Draco turned around from the sink.

'They didn't really say that much, but I have an appointment at 2 so I suppose everything will become clear then.'

The time passed really slowly until it was time to leave. Finally it was half past one and I was ready to go.

'Draco?'

'Yes?'

'Will you come with me? At least to the door of the lawyers, then you can go and look round the shops for a bit. I could lend you some money.'

'Sure, I would like to see some more of muggle London anyway.'

'Great.'

My head felt like it was spinning as I thought through all the things Mr Sweet may want to see me about. As a consequence I was really quiet the whole of the journey there and only spoke to direct Draco when we needed to get off. Oxford Street was its normal bustling self.

'You may want to stay close as it can be so crazy around here,' I turned and said this to Draco who was looking a bit bewildered. He nodded and I led the way to Thames Street. I looked down at the letter that I had brought with me and stopped outside number 114. It just looked like a normal terraced house, the only sign that it was a lawyers was a small plaque by the doorbell which read *Sweet and Co. Lawyers*.

'Is this it?' Draco asked.

'Yes,' I said simply.

'Well it is two, are you going to ring the doorbell?' Draco asked after a while.

'Oh, yes.'

I reached out for the doorbell which turned out to be a buzzer.

‘Hello? How can I help you?’ A voice which was slightly crackly came out from the grill next to the button for the buzzer.

‘What the hell?’ Draco exclaimed.

‘It’s called an intercom, it’s used as a security system, a bit like a telephone,’ I said and pressing the button spoke into the grill, ‘hello, I have an appointment. My name is Rebecca Jones.’

‘Oh, lovely. Mr Sweet is expecting you, I am just buzzing you in now. Come on in.’

A buzzing sound came from the door and when I pushed on it gently it opened.

‘Right,’ I said.

‘Right,’ Draco repeated.

I bit my lip, ‘you wouldn’t mind coming in with me, would you?’ I asked nervously.

‘No, of course not. I would probably get lost in London without your help anyway,’ Draco said smiling.

‘Thanks,’ I said and opened the door.

‘Don’t even mention it.’

The inside of the building looked like the Georgian house that it was from the outside. I looked around the hallway, at the tiled floor, the paintings, at the vaulted ceiling, at the grand staircase – it was truly beautiful.

‘Wow,’ I found myself speaking out loud. ‘So many of these houses have been stripped off the original features.’

Draco looked at me confused.

‘Sorry, slight history addiction.’

‘Good afternoon,’ I was forced out of my gazing around as I looked to where the voice was coming from. A middle-aged woman dressed in a smart suit was smiling at Draco and I.

‘Hello,’ I said still slightly overwhelmed by my surroundings.

‘It is really good to meet you at last, Miss Jones. I’m Mrs Penny,’ the woman held out her hand and I shook hands with her. ‘And who is this young gentleman?’

‘This is Draco Malfoy, a good friend of mine,’ I said as Mrs Penny offers her hand to Draco who shook it politely.

‘Lovely,’ Mrs Penny said smiling. ‘Now, Mr Sweet is expecting you so if you would follow me.’

We followed her through one of the doors leading off from the hallway and into what looked like a waiting area with a large reception desk.

‘If you wouldn’t mind taking a seat, I shall let Mr Sweet know of your arrival,’ she walked away briskly down a corridor and out of sight.

Draco and I both sat down in a large, brown, leather chair. It was only a few minutes until Mrs Penny returned,

‘Mr Sweet is ready to see you now, Miss Jones. Just follow the corridor and it is the fifth door on the right,’ I stood up and started to walk in the direction she had indicated. I heard Mrs Penny talk to Draco, ‘Mr Malfoy, would you like a cup of coffee or tea or even some hot chocolate.’

I came to the fifth door on the right and there was a plaque on the door which confirmed that it was the right door. I took a deep breath and knocked on the door. To my surprise I heard nothing in reply but suddenly the door opened.

‘Oh, it’s good to finally meet you, Miss Jones. Come in, please,’ Mr Sweet shook my hand. He turned out to be a portly gentleman probably in his late fifties with a full head of greying hair. I followed him into his office which was richly decorated. It was quite a large room with wood panelling on the majority of the walls, the ceilings

were high and there were luxurious curtains hanging at the window. The furniture consisted of a large mahogany desk and matching padded chair, there was also a brown leather sofa and two armchairs.

‘Please take a seat,’ Mr Sweet gestured to one of the armchairs and the sofa. I sat down on one of the armchairs. Mr Sweet took a brown cardboard folder from his desk and sat down in the armchair opposite me. ‘Would you like a cup of tea?’ He asked.

‘No, thank you. I am fine,’ I said quietly. I just wanted him to get to the point of why I had been called in to see him.

‘Now, I am sure that you are desperate to know why you are here but I should first explain my position. Do you know what a squib is?’

‘A squib? No I don’t think I have ever heard that word before.’

‘A squib is the name given to the child of a witch and wizard that possesses no magical powers. They are quite rare and grow up knowing all about the world of magic and also the world of muggles,’ Mr Sweet explained. ‘I happen to be a squib but luckily my parents didn’t mind too much and allowed me to choose my own career. I settled on Law and here I am. I have been able, though, to help wizards and witches especially when they have to deal with muggles as well as my normal muggle duties. When your mother was killed, I was asked by Professor Dumbledore to take care of your estate until you were able to return. He told me of the spell he had placed on your house which included that on the day following your return a letter from myself would arrive asking you to come and see me and here you are.’ He smiled broadly at me and I couldn’t help but smile back.

‘You are looking well despite all that you have been through. I have heard titbits about what happened back at Hogwarts...’ I shifted uncomfortably in my chair which Mr Sweet picked up on. ‘But now isn’t the time to talk about that as it must still be rather raw for you.’

I breathed a sigh of relief and Mr Sweet continued, ‘I have settled all your mother’s accounts and have placed your inheritance into a bank account in your name which I will give you the details for later. You own the house without a mortgage and are free to do with it what you wish.’

Mr Sweet seemed to pause to allow me to take it all in. I thought about the house that although I had been so keen to come home too had seemed so empty and cold without Mum. I realised then that I really didn't want to live there anymore. It wasn't the same without Mum and at the moment it felt too painful to be there.

'Would it be possible to sell the house?'

'If you want to, then yes, of course, when would you like it put on the market?'

'As soon as possible really, I just feel that I need to move on and start to put everything behind me.'

'Well, I shall arrange for an estate agent to contact you and sort everything out. The position and condition of your house should enable a quick sale. Do you wish to arrange temporary accommodation in the mean time?'

'No, it will be fine staying there. I have a lot to sort out.'

'If you need any help with anything then please do not hesitate in contacting me.'

'Thanks. Do you think I am doing the right thing selling the house?'

'Yes, it probably feels strange being there without your mother and it must bring back terrible memories as it was the location of your mother's death,' Mr Sweet said softly and I looked down at the floor.

'It sounds like she was an incredible person.'

'She was,' I said quietly.

'It was a shame that you were unable to attend the funeral. There were lots of people there and they all had good things to say about your mother. I arranged for her to be buried as she had indicated that she wanted this in her will.' I bit my lip and tried to fight back the tears that are threatening to come. 'She is buried in a graveyard quite close to your house by St Stephen's Church. Do you know it?'

‘Oh, yes, I do.’

‘Her grave is located at the back near an oak tree.’

‘Ok, thanks.’

‘Do you have any questions or anything that you want to know?’

I shook my head.

‘Well, here are the details for your bank account and I shall ring an estate agent today and set the wheels in motion for the sale of your house.’

‘Thanks, for everything,’ I smiled.

‘I shall let you go now but I just have to say that I think your mother would be very proud of you,’ Mr Sweet said standing up and walked over to the door.

‘Thanks,’ I said and walked out of the door. Mr Sweet walked me back to the waiting area where Mrs Penny looked very industrious on a computer. Draco looked up as we approached a glossy magazine in his lap. I smiled at him and he got up.

‘Margaret, could you get me the phone number of an estate agent that has a good reputation?’

‘Certainly.’

‘Goodbye, Miss Jones.’

‘Bye, thanks again.’

Mr Sweet saw us personally to the main door to the street which seemed really noisy after the quietness of his offices. Draco and I started to walk back to the underground station.

‘Did you get everything sorted out?’

‘Yes, he is a squib so knows about everything.’

‘Oh, right.’

‘I have decided to sell the house.’

‘Really?’ Draco seemed slightly taken aback by this news.

‘It just doesn’t feel like home anymore and maybe it is time to move on,’

‘Do you want me to move out?’

‘No, why do you want to?’

‘No, I just don’t want to intrude.’

‘I was rather hoping that you would decide to move with me. I don’t want to be on my own and even though we have only known each other for a short time, everything we saw everything we experienced seems to have accelerated our friendship.’

‘I know what you mean, I feel more comfortable with you then I ever did with my friends at Hogwarts.’

We smiled at each other as we entered the underground station. Once on the train I said,

‘Would you mind if we didn’t go straight home? There is something that I need to do first but it shouldn’t take too long.’

‘What is it?’

‘Mr Sweet told me the whereabouts of Mum’s grave and I would like to put some flowers on it,’ I looked out of the window even though there was nothing to see but the black of the tunnels that make up the underground.

‘Oh, of course.’

On the way to the church, I stopped off at a florist to pick up some of Mum’s favourite flowers. It didn’t take long to find Mum’s grave as it was exactly where Mr Sweet had said it would be. Draco excused himself and I knelt in front of the grave and arranged the flowers. The

headstone was engraved with the words '*Most beloved Mother who will be greatly missed.*' Seeing her name there really seemed to confirm that I wouldn't be seeing Mum again and I let the tears come that had been threatening all afternoon.

I took deep breaths and calmed myself down.

'Would you like a tissue?' Draco said quietly from behind me.

'Thanks,' I said. 'Sorry about this.'

'Rebecca, there is nothing to apologise for,' Draco said and helped me to stand up again. I smiled and we walked out of the graveyard.

Facing the Past

'Good morning Rebecca,' Draco said happily. In the ten months that had passed since we had moved into the new house I had discovered he was much more of a morning person than I was. Here he was all bright-eyed where I could hardly keep my eyes open.

'Hello,' I mumbled.

'And how are you this fine morning?'

'I haven't quite decided yet.'

'Oh, dear, anyway what are your plans for today?' Draco asked and handed me a very welcome cup of tea.

'Well I have college this morning but then my afternoon is free.'

'Good, do you want to meet for lunch?'

'Sure.'

'Ok, then shall we say 12.30 outside the Shopping Centre?'

'Sounds good.'

'Right, well I am off to work I shall see you then.'

'Bye, have a good day.'

Draco left for work. I helped myself to some breakfast and tried to wake up. I was really grateful that I only had college this morning. I am really enjoying my classes but it is hard work especially because I had been away for a year I had got out of practice. The sixth form college I had chosen is lovely. It is nearly exam time which I am not looking forward to but I did fine in my mock exams and if anything disastrous happens then I can always retake them. I am doing four AS Levels, History, Maths, Religious Studies and Sociology. Draco had taken Mr Sweet's advice and had gone into banking after scoring very highly in the required numeracy and literacy tests. I am not completely convinced he is enjoying his career but he does seem

satisfied. We split everything, bills, food shopping, council tax and so on, exactly in half. I paid mine out of my inheritance and savings, Draco and I had become rather inseparable as best friends. I had friends at college but none were as close as Draco.

Where is he? I thought to myself as I waited outside the Shopping Centre. It was nearing one and there was still no sign of Draco. At first I thought he had just got delayed at work but this was getting ridiculous. I looked at my mobile but there were no messages, I thought about ringing him but decided against it, it wasn't that important. I gathered my things to leave when suddenly I saw a familiar face amongst the crowd outside the Shopping Centre. My heart started to race as I tried to convince myself that I had made a mistake it couldn't possibly be him. Why would Harry Potter be here of all places? I quickly started to walk away before he saw me but,

'Rebecca? Wait.' He called out.

I started to run now and hoping that he is unfamiliar with the streets of the town I started weaving my way in and out of the little streets. I made it to the bus stop having gone the long way, I looked behind me but there was no sign of him. My bus arrived and I got on it. I paid my fare and sat down on one of the seats. I only breathed a sigh of relief when the bus started to move. My head felt like it was spinning, I closed my eyes and tried to steady my breathing and stop shaking. The bus arrived at my stop and I got off thanking the driver. I looked around me and walked the short walk home. I closed the door and locked it. I could tell that Draco wasn't home yet as his jacket wasn't hanging in the hall. I put my bag down on the sofa and walked into the kitchen. I put the kettle on for a cup of tea. I thought about having something to eat but decided that I didn't really fancy anything. I made my tea and carried it back into the lounge. I sat down on the sofa. I pulled out a textbook from my bag and started reading it. I stopped after ten minutes when I realised that I was not taking it in at all. I put the book down and finished my tea. I walked back to the kitchen and washed up the cup and left it to drain. I thought desperately of something I could do to occupy myself and decided on hovering. I got out the vacuum cleaner and hoovered the whole house from top to bottom apart from Draco's room. I was putting the

vacuum cleaner away when I heard the doorbell go. My heart skips a beat, it can't be him I thought and peeped out of the window. I put my hand to my face when I saw that Harry was standing on my doorstep. He rang the doorbell again. I felt myself start to shake again.

'Rebecca? Please answer the door, I know you are there. Rebecca? We need to talk.'

Ignoring his persistent ringing of the bell, I ran upstairs and into my room. I closed the door and turned on my music really loudly to block out everything. I laid on my bed and curled up. I couldn't believe this was happening, why is he here? The last time I saw him comes flooding back to me, it was just after the final battle. I closed my eyes and tried to block out the memory of that day.

There was a knock on my door.

'Rebecca? It's me Draco, can I come in?'

'Yes,' I called out. I sat up and leant against the wall.

Draco walked in looking concerned. 'Are you ok?' He asked and sat down on the bed besides me.

I shook my head and felt tears welling up in my eyes. 'I was waiting outside the Shopping Centre for you and was just about to go when I see none other but Harry Potter, he calls out to me but I run away. I get the bus and come back here but he comes here. How did he find me? Why is he here?'

Draco looked uneasy, stood up and turned away from me to the window.

'Draco, you don't seem that surprised, did you hear me? Harry was here, he was here.'

'I heard you.'

'Where were you anyway? It was your idea to meet up for lunch...' I paused as it suddenly dawned on me. 'No,' I said. 'You knew didn't you, you set this whole meeting up. How could you?'

'Rebecca, you can't keep hiding from them forever.'

'Why not?'

Draco seemed unable to answer.

I suddenly couldn't stand to be in the same room as him and headed for the door.

'He's downstairs.'

I turned back. Draco still had his back to me.

'What?' I asked shocked.

'Harry is downstairs, I found him sitting on the doorstep.'

'And you let him in? Oh this is brilliant, brilliant.'

'You have to talk to him.' Draco said turning to face me.

'Oh do I?'

'Yes, he deserves an explanation for why you ran away?' He took one of my hands and pulled me out of my room and into the hallway.

'Let go of me,' I said and tried to pull my hand away but he gripped it tighter. He practically dragged me down the stairs and into the lounge. Harry was sitting on the edge of one of the chairs. He stood up when he saw us enter. He looked down at where Draco was still holding my hand.

'Sit down, Rebecca.' Draco said firmly and gently pushed me onto the sofa. He sat down besides me. Harry also sat back down.

'Hello,' Harry said. 'You are looking well, Rebecca.'

Somehow I managed to reply, 'thanks, you are looking well as well.'

'So, what happened earlier? Did you chicken out or something?' Harry said looking slightly confused.

'Earlier? Do you mean at the Shopping Centre? I was waiting for Draco.'

'Not me, then?'

'No, seeing you came as a bit of a surprise.'

'But in your letter, you said to meet there at that time.'

'What letter?'

'Is this some kind of joke? What letter? One of the letters we have been writing to each other for the last two months or so.'

'I haven't written any letters or seen any letters you may have written to me.' Draco shifted uncomfortably next to me. 'Draco, do you know anything about these letters?' I said turning to him.

'Don't get any more mad with me then you already are but yes I do.'

'Hang on, let me get this right you have been writing to Harry pretending to be me for the last two months.'

'Sounds about right.'

'Well you haven't changed have you Malfoy? Bet you had a real laugh when you read my letters,' Harry said angrily.

'For your information, I didn't laugh at all.'

Harry didn't seem to believe this.

'Well, then why did you do it?' I asked.

'When Harry's first letter came I recognised his writing, I thought about giving to you straight away but I wanted to see what he had to say first. If it wasn't nice then you would never have to know about.'

‘Are there any other letters that I should know about that you have censored?’

‘No.’

‘So, you didn’t think I could handle a letter from Harry. I am not a little kid, I may be a year younger than you but it is only a year.’

‘I had no doubt that you could handle it, I just wasn’t sure that I wanted to make you have to deal with it.’

‘So you didn’t know I was coming today?’ Harry asked me.

‘No, hence why I ran away. I’m sorry.’

‘No, I am. This has been a waste of time. I came here thinking that you were ready to see me when you clearly weren’t. All I want is an explanation, Rebecca, why did you leave after the battle, without even saying goodbye?’

‘I am sorry about that, I wasn’t thinking straight. My first instinct was just to leave.’

‘Well, I think it’s more than that.’ Draco said.

‘Oh, do you? Anything else you would like to tell me about myself as you seem to know so much?’ I got up.

‘Where are you going?’

‘I am going to get some fresh air, if that’s ok with you?’

Draco nodded and I walked out of the room through the kitchen to the back garden. I sat down on the bench in front of the pond. I folded my legs up and hugged them. I felt so angry at Draco yet I knew that he was only doing what he thought was right. Why did life have to be so complicated?

‘Rebecca?’ It’s Draco. He sat down on the bench besides me. ‘I think it’s time we talked about what happened, that day at Hogwarts.’

‘But we made a pact.’

'Only to not speak about it until we were both ready, it has been nearly a year now.'

'Well, I don't want to talk about it.'

'I know you don't but that doesn't mean that you aren't ready. Look I realise now what I did wasn't one of my finer moments but I can see that there is something you are holding back. Why did you leave Hogwarts?'

'I never belonged there anyway, I had to stay so as soon as I could go I left.'

'Rebecca, please just tell me the truth. I thought I had earned your trust after all these months.'

'I do trust you.'

'Then?'

'Fine. Shortly after the battle had finished and Voldemort had been killed, I was taken to the hospital wing with the others to be checked over. I realised that I was able to hear what people were thinking without having to do anything. Must have been some kind of side effect of all what happened. Anyway I was put in a room with Harry. Both of us were so shaken up that we couldn't really talk about what happened. But...'

'You heard what he was thinking?'

'Yes.'

'Well?'

'He was thinking that it was all my fault that Ron and Professor Dumbledore had been killed, I should have been quicker to arrive, I should have concentrated harder. That's what he was thinking.'

'But, you couldn't have arrived any earlier, my father... well enough said. As for concentrating harder, how could you when Voldemort

was doing what he was doing to you? How could he think that?' He stood up from the bench.

'Draco, where are you going?'

'Potter needs to be set straight.'

'No, please don't.' But it was to no avail as Draco was already making his way back inside. I ran after him.

'Potter?' Draco shouted.

'Draco, please calm down, this isn't going to help anyone,' I said desperately.

'How could you be so stupid, Potter? Do you know what this girl sacrificed to help you? A thank you would have been nice, but no instead you turn on her and blame her for Weasley's and Dumbledore's deaths.'

'What are you talking about, Malfoy? I never said anything of the sort.'

'Doesn't mean that you weren't thinking it.'

'Please, stop.' I said desperately. Harry turned to face me.

'You read my mind?'

'Oh so you don't deny it then.' Draco answered for me.

'I can't believe you read my mind, after what happened,' Harry said with a shocked expression.

'I didn't do it deliberately. I could hear what everyone was thinking. It must have been a side-effect of what I had done.'

'So, you heard what I was thinking and that's why you ran away.'

'Partly, yes.'

'And you didn't think about speaking to me about it?'

‘Harry, I couldn’t talk about what had happened. I just had to get away. Maybe I would have run even if I hadn’t heard you.’

‘What did I say?’

‘It doesn’t matter.’

‘Why are you lying Rebecca, it does matter, it obviously matters to you, and I think there is a part of you that believes Potter is right, that you were to blame for Weasley’s and Dumbledore’s death which is ridiculous as it was Voldemort who killed them.’ Draco said and turned to Harry. ‘You said that she should have been quicker and should have concentrated harder.’

‘Well, where were you when Voldemort arrived? We needed you then.’

I looked away unable to answer.

‘Rebecca? Fine, I shall tell him. Voldemort arrived over an hour before he appeared to you, he met up with my father and I. We found Rebecca. He ordered that she would be locked away and I would guard her. My father visited us and decided that he wanted to scare Rebecca a little bit. She managed to get him to drop his wand, but he decided to be more physical with her. I killed him and we came as quickly as we could but that’s why she wasn’t there at the beginning.’

‘Why didn’t you tell me?’

‘I don’t know.’

‘Did you ask Potter? Did you even notice she wasn’t there until Weasley was dead? No, I didn’t think so.’

‘How can you of all people judge me, Malfoy? You, who changed sides right at the last minute. At least I was fighting for the right side the whole time.’

I saw that this hit a nerve with Draco and so I said. ‘Look, I don’t think it matters when he changed sides, the fact is that he did.’

'Oh you would say that, I have to say this is a cosy arrangement you have set up here, you and Malfoy living together.'

'What do you mean?'

'I'm not stupid, I can see that you are obviously going out with each other. Though I have to say I am surprised. You do realise, Malfoy, that Rebecca is a muggle with filthy mud-blood?'

'Harry! For one thing Draco and I are not going out, we are just good friends.'

'Well that's not what it looks like.'

'See what you want to see Harry. Draco saved my life.'

'What after he led Voldemort to you? Some hero.'

'What's your problem, Potter? Don't you like to see Rebecca happy?'

'Not with you.'

'For the last time, we are not going out. I think you should leave.'

'Don't like hearing the truth about your precious boyfriend do you?'

'GET OUT OF MY HOUSE.'

'Fine.' Draco pushed him out of the house.

I walked to the kitchen and started looking through the cupboards. I looked up when Draco came in.

'Right, what do you want to eat?'

'Eat?'

'Yes, I could do us some pasta, or maybe a pizza.'

'Rebecca, don't do this.'

‘What? Cook? I suppose we could have a take-away.’ I started to look through the drawer with the leaflets from take-away places.

‘You know what I mean.’

Ignoring him, ‘what do you fancy? Chinese or Indian.’

‘Rebecca, look at me.’

When I continued to look through the leaflets he grabbed my hands from the drawer and shut it.

‘Oh, you don’t want a take-away then. Well all you had to do was say.’ He grabbed my shoulders and turned me around to face him.

‘Don’t do this, don’t pretend what just happened didn’t happen. We need to talk about it. Don’t shut me out. Tell me how you are feeling.’

‘Let go of me. What do you want me to say, Draco? How I am really feeling? Fine, I shall tell you. I am really hurting at the moment, I know you didn’t make Harry say all that he said but you brought him here. You are the one who has been writing to him pretending to be me and arranged the whole thing... need I go on,’ I said.

‘I realise that you are really annoyed at me at the moment but you can’t blame yourself for what happened. It wasn’t your fault that Voldemort killed Weasley and Professor Dumbledore, it wasn’t your fault that you weren’t able to be there straight away...’

‘I know, deep down I know that but when I heard Harry thinking those things, it hurt me so much. I knew that he would never have said those things aloud but the fact that he had even thought them for a minisecond was enough to make me run. I had been thinking about running away, coming home, before I heard him though.’

‘You really cared about Harry didn’t you?’ Draco said his voice strange.

‘Yes, I did.’

‘And now?’

‘Draco, did you hear the things he said?’

‘I did, Rebecca, I am sorry for bringing him here. I didn’t know the real reason for why you ran away, maybe I should have found it out before I replied to Harry’s letter, but it is too late now. All I can do now is ask you to forgive me.’

‘Everything has been going so well, at college, here everything. I was finally beginning to be able to put what happened behind me, the nightmares had stopped, I had stopped having flashbacks during the day... Maybe I would have eventually contacted Harry, Hermione and Ginny but it needed to be my decision, on my terms. Maybe I wouldn’t have contacted them, I don’t know,’ I said and slid down one of the cabinets and hid my head in my hands.

‘I should have given you the choice. I just didn’t want anything or anyone to hurt you anymore,’ Draco said softly and knelt beside me, he placed his arm around me and just let me cry.

After five minutes, I decided to pull myself together,

‘Right, I feel better now.’

‘Really?’

‘Never underestimate the healing power of a good cry,’ I said with a slight smile. Draco helped me stand and then pulled me into a tight hug.

‘I’m sorry, Rebecca,’ he whispered.

‘Look it’s ok, no harm done. I would have had to see him again eventually,’ I said and pulled away gently.

‘But...?’

‘Draco, just leave it ok?’

Draco nodded.

‘Right what shall we have for dinner?’

'Well I shall go and get us a takeaway, you stay here, put your feet up, watch some telly.'

'Sounds lovely.'

'See you soon.' Draco left the house and I walked slowly to the lounge. It seemed strange to think that just a short while ago Harry was in my house. I hadn't seen him for nearly a year. He hadn't really changed that much, although I did notice that his eyes seemed less haunted. I suppose when we last saw each other, he had just killed Voldemort and before that there was always the threat of Voldemort. I turned on the telly and flicked through the channels desperately trying to find something that would occupy my mind as every time I thought about Harry I felt like crying again. I found a film starting in ten minutes which I had seen hundreds of times but it was one of my favourites. I tried to lose myself in the end of a programme and the adverts that follow.

'Hey, I'm home. I hope you don't mind fish and chips. But it is the nearest one...'

'Sounds lovely, I'll get the plates and drinks. Sit down, this film is really good,' I said smiling and took the plastic bag from Draco. I put the food on plates and got two cans from the fridge. I added salt and vinegar to mine and tomato ketchup to Draco's. I put them all on a tray and carried it through into the lounge.

'Thanks,' Draco said as I handed him his plate and drink. I sat down on my favourite armchair and engrossed myself in eating and watching the film.

I had been tossing and turning for hours, I sat up in bed. It was four in the morning and I decided that enough is enough. I obviously wasn't going to get any sleep tonight. I got out of bed and put on my dressing gown and slippers. I walked quietly down the stairs and into the kitchen. I made a cup of tea and sat down at the kitchen table and reached for one of my textbooks. I got some paper and a pen and lost myself in some algebraic equations.

Five hours later and I had completed my maths questions, my set History notes, a short essay for Religious Studies and a presentation for Sociology and several cups of tea. I was quite pleased that I had finished all my homework, normally I was still doing it late Sunday evening. I put everything away and stretched out,

‘Good morning,’ it was Draco still in his pajamas.

‘Morning,’ I replied and let out a yawn.

‘What are you doing?’

‘Well I couldn’t sleep so I have done all my homework.’

‘Have you not slept at all?’

‘Nope.’

‘Oh, Rebecca.’

‘Do you want some tea? Coffee?’

‘A tea would be lovely, thanks,’ Draco sat down at the kitchen table as I made him a cup of tea. I made some cereal for myself and then Draco decided he would like some too so I made him some as well.

‘Draco?’

‘Ummmm,’ Draco replied, not looking up from his newspaper.

‘Could I have Harry’s address?’

‘What?’ Draco looked up now.

‘Could I have Harry’s address, please?’

‘I heard what you said, I just don’t understand.’

‘I can’t leave things the way they are, I need to go and see him, apologise...’

‘Apologise? Why do you want to apologise?’

‘Because if he is hurting half as much as I am about the whole thing then I want to do something. Apologising would be a start, he thought the letters were from me, he thought I wanted to see him, he thinks that I ran away because of what he was thinking...’

‘Well that is why you ran away.’

‘Not the whole reason, I just had to get away like you obviously had to as well.’

‘I don’t think it is a good idea,’ Draco said quietly.

‘What else do you suggest then? That I just pretend that nothing happened yesterday? Or that I pretend that I am ok with what happened?’

Draco said nothing.

‘Draco, I need to do this.’ Still nothing, exasperated I headed for the kitchen door.

‘Where are you going?’ Draco asked.

‘I’m going to have a shower and get dressed.’

I was just putting on my trainers when Draco knocked on my door and came in.

‘Here you are,’ he handed me a handful of what looks like letters.

‘Thanks.’

‘When are you going?’

‘Right now,’ I said looking quickly through the letters. I got my A to Z map of London and looked up the address. Harry’s house wasn’t too far away, well not on the tube anyway. I put the map in my bag and got my jacket.

‘And there is nothing I can say to make you change your mind?’

‘Not really no.’

'Do you want me to come with you?'

'No, thanks for offering but I think this is something I need to do on my own.'

'Fair enough.'

'I don't know when I will be back but I have my phone with me, I will see you later, Have a good day.'

The journey was a smooth one. I took the opportunity to read through the letters. They were really lovely, they were all on the same lines. Harry had written that I was missed greatly and people were worried about me and would love to see me again. Reading the letters confirmed that I was doing the right thing, which I convinced myself over and over again as I neared Harry's address. It turned out to be a newly built block of flats. I walked into the foyer as the door was open and pressed the button for the lift. My heart was racing as the lift door opened and I pushed the right button for Harry's flat. I paused outside the door of the flat, I took a deep breath and pushed the doorbell. I could hear the bell going inside but no one came to the door. After a few minutes, I tried again but there was still nothing. I realised that I was actually feeling quite disappointed, I wondered what to do next. Suddenly the letters came back to me and I pulled out a notebook and pen from my bag and sat down on the floor to write a letter.

After a number of drafts I was finally satisfied,

Dear Harry,

I came by your flat today, I hope you don't mind but I really needed to see you. Since you left yesterday I haven't been able to stop thinking about you. I am so sorry about what happened. It came across that it was your fault that I left Hogwarts because of what you were thinking but that is only partly true. I never felt I truly belonged at Hogwarts and I don't think I ever would have. You, Ron, Hermione and Ginny were so kind to me and so lovely that now I feel so bad for just running away like I did. I can't really explain why I did, none of the explanations I have thought of sound good enough. After the battle I was in shock, I suppose we all were, it was horrible, truly horrible what happened. I was so confused. There was a huge part of me that

did, and still does, blame myself for Ron and Professor Dumbledore's deaths. Hearing what you were thinking, I couldn't bear it thinking that you felt that way. I don't blame you at all for thinking that then or even still thinking it now, I just couldn't cope with it then. I felt ashamed that it was my father, Voldemort who had caused all this pain and hurt that I was seeing on everyone's faces. Professor Dumbledore had already given me the keys to my house which I had shared with my Mum and going home seemed to be the perfect solution. I met Draco on the train station and offered him a place to stay. I feel like I have only recently started to deal with what happened and beginning to understand what my feelings are about everything. In some ways I am glad that Draco wrote back to you as I don't honestly know if I would have. I wasn't ready but I am now. I would really like to see you again, so we can talk face to face – I promise I won't run away! Please either ring me (my phone number is on the top of this note) or just pop round to my house at any time. Please take care of yourself.

Rebecca.

I folded the note over and posted it through the letterbox. I made my way back home.

'How did it go?' Draco asked as soon as I get in the door.

'He wasn't there, so I just left a note.'

'Oh.'

'I think I will go upstairs and try and have a nap.'

I walked upstairs and into my room, I only took off my shoes before getting back into my bed.

I woke up a few hours later to hear the doorbell go. I laid still wondering who it could be on Saturday afternoon but I could only hear the muffled sounds of people talking. Someone walked up the stairs, there was a knock on my door.

'Rebecca? Can I come in?' It was Draco.

'Yes,' I said and sat up in bed.

As he opened the door the voices from downstairs drifted upstairs and I heard, to my surprise, Ginny's voice.

'Ginny's here?' I asked and started pacing up and down my room.

'Yes, and her parents and Harry and Hermione,' Draco said calmly.

'All those people are in my house?' I raised my eyebrows in surprise.

'Yes, and they all want to see you.'

I turned away from him and started to feel my heart race and my hands shake.

'Rebecca?'

'Please tell them I will be down in a few minutes,' I turned back to him.

Draco nodded and left the room quietly.

I composed myself by brushing my hair and straightening my clothes. I forced myself out of the door and down the stairs. The lounge door was ajar but without really thinking about it I ran to the front door instead and closed it behind me. I heard it open and closed again and thinking it was Draco said,

'I'm sorry, I came down the stairs fully intending to come into the lounge but I bottled it. Earlier I was ready to see Harry but now I seem to have lost my nerve,' I said quickly.

'That's a shame,' I turned round quickly to find Harry behind me.

'Harry?' He walked towards me.

'I got your note and had to come and see you straightway. I am glad that you explained everything to me, I see things more clearly now and I am sorry for my behaviour yesterday.'

'But...'

‘Just let me apologise, Rebecca. And for what I was thinking after the battle, I clearly wasn’t thinking straight as I should not have been blaming you but thanking you for all that you did.’

We stared at each other for a while before I followed my instincts and hugged him.

‘It is so good to see you again, Rebecca.’

‘You too.’

‘Now, I hope you don’t mind but I brought some friends with me who are dying to see you.’

I smiled and we headed back into the house.

As soon as I entered the lounge I was hugged tightly by Ginny.

‘Oh, Rebecca, I have missed you so much.’

‘Hello, Ginny.’

‘I’ve missed you too,’ this time I was hugged by Hermione.

‘Hello, dear,’ I turned to face Mr and Mrs Weasley and at that moment had an overwhelming desire to be somewhere else.

‘Hello,’ I said quietly. ‘Now would anyone like a cup of tea?’ Everyone looked a bit surprised.

‘Rebecca, I’ll get them,’ Draco said and stood in the way of me and the kitchen.

‘No, I shall go,’ I said firmly and walked out of the lounge and into the kitchen. It was only when I put the kettle on that I realised that I am shaking. I got out the best cups and saucers and laid them out on a tray. The kettle boiled and I filled the tea pot and placed that on the tray as well. As I was not quite ready to return to the lounge I thought desperately of something else to do, when I remembered biscuits and in my eagerness to get the biscuit jar out of the cupboard I dropped it

and it smashed onto the floor. I knelt down on the floor and started to pick up the pieces.

‘Leave that sweetie,’ came a voice and it was Mrs Weasley.

‘No, it’s ok,’ I said but I managed to cut my hand as I couldn’t see straight as there were tears welling up in my eyes.

‘You shouldn’t blame yourself,’ Mrs Weasley said gently. ‘Arthur and I certainly don’t blame you for Ron’s death.’

‘But I should have been there earlier, I should have helped...’ I leant back against one of the cupboard doors.

‘You did your best, Rebecca.’

‘Well it wasn’t enough.’

‘How can you say that? Without you, Voldemort may never have been killed,’ Mrs Weasley knelt down besides me and placed an arm on my shoulder. ‘You were so brave. We were all really worried about you when you disappeared so quickly after it was all over but we understood that you needed some space. It is so good to get to meet you properly,’ Mrs Weasley said soothingly.

‘It’s good to meet you too, sorry that I... um... freaked out a bit,’ I said.

‘It’s completely understandable. Now can I do what I have been desperate to do?’

‘What?’ I said.

‘This,’ Mrs Weasley wrapped her arms around me and gave me a hug. It reminded me so much of the hugs that my Mum used to give me that I felt myself crying again. ‘It’s ok, sweetie, everything is going to be ok.’

I don’t know how long we sat on the kitchen floor with me in Mrs Weasley’s arms but I realised that she was right, everything was going to be ok.

Disagreements over Dinner

'Post is here,' I said and carried through the small stack of letters into the kitchen. 'Bill...bill... something that looks like junk... a letter for you.' I handed the letter to Draco and sat down at the breakfast bar and opened up the other letters. Taking a sip of orange juice I realised that Draco is staring at the letter and looks shocked. He seemed to notice that I am looking at him and quickly thrusts the letter into his briefcase. He put on his jacket.

'Draco? What about breakfast?' I asked, slightly confused.

'Well, I have just remembered that I am meant to be going into work early today, I shall get something on the way.'

'Oh, ok. Is everything ok?'

'Yes, everything's fine, have a good day. Good luck with your last exam. I shall see you tonight.'

I heard the thud of the front door as Draco left. Despite what he had said I knew that something was wrong, and that something was to do with the letter that he had received this morning. It was up to him though to tell me, though if I am being completely honest it did hurt me a bit that he seemed so reluctant to tell me what was going on. I finished my toast and loaded the dishwasher and grabbing my jacket and bag headed out as well. I decided to walk to college today as it is quite sunny outside so plugged in my mp3 player and walking always settled my nerves before an exam. Our house isn't that far away from college, only takes about ten minutes on the bus, and forty-five minutes walking. I was coming to the end of year thirteen, my last year and my final a level exams would all be over today. I was looking forward to finishing, I would miss college and the friends that I had made but ahead of me was university. I had decided long ago that I really wanted to be a teacher and am excited about starting the teacher training course in September. Mum had been a secondary school teacher and had always joked that she could see me following in her footsteps, I liked to think that she would be proud that I was although I had decided to be a primary school teacher instead. My thoughts are interrupted by the sound of my phone, I stopped walking for a moment as I had to dig deep in my bag for my phone. I mentally

tell myself that I should really tidy up my bag and be more organised as it would save me so much time. I do find it though and it is still ringing, I took out my earphones, noticed that is Ginny calling and answered the phone,

'Hello Ginny,' I said smiling. I put my mp3 player in my bag and started walking again as knowing Ginny this could be a long conversation.

'Hello, Rebecca, I tried phoning the house but there was no answer.'

'I am on the way to college.'

'Oh, of course, I am always forgetting that you are still at school.'

'Not for that much longer though – it is my last exam today.'

'Oh that must be a relief. So how have your exams gone anyway?'

'I think ok so far.'

'Good, good. Well, are you and Draco doing anything special tonight?'

'I don't think so, no.'

'In that case would you both like to come round for dinner? I have been twiddling my thumbs since finishing at Hogwarts and would love to have a little dinner party. I shall invite Hermione and Neville as well.'

'Sounds lovely, are you sure though as aren't holidays meant for relaxing?'

'Well, I can relax afterwards.'

'I shall check with Draco when he gets in from work tonight, but I don't think it will be a problem.'

'How is Draco enjoying his new job?' Draco had been working in a bank for the last two years and had recently been promoted.

'Well, he says he is but I am not completely convinced. I think he finds it boring but he doesn't want to seem to do anything about it.'

'Men, eh?'

'I know, what are they like?' We both laughed.

'Anyway, I am planning to serve dinner at about eight but feel free to come round from about seven.'

'Ok then. It shall give me something to look forward to today, get me through my exam.'

'Great, I shall ring Hermione then and see if she can come.'

'Say hello from me. I shall let you know if for any reason we aren't able to come.'

'Sure, hope to see you tonight. Good luck.'

'Thanks, bye.'

I put the phone in my bag and took out my mp3 player again and couldn't stop myself from smiling. It had been a while since we had all got together. Harry and Ginny seemed really happy and I knew that Ginny was busy planning their wedding which was going to be held this Autumn, Hermione and I were to be her bridesmaids. It was all rather exciting. When people had questioned Harry and Ginny as to whether they were marrying too young they had always pointed out that life was too short and no one knew was around the corner. I think that Draco had expected me to be upset about Ginny and Harry being together as he seemed to think that I still really liked Harry but I was happy for them. They seemed perfect for each other and had been together since shortly after the final battle.

My History exam was much better then I expected and I was satisfied with how I had answered the questions. I was just coming out of the college gates of the college thinking about how much heavier my bag was than this morning with the huge amount of stuff that I had to clear out of my locker when I heard someone calling out,

'Hey, Rebecca?' To my surprise it was Draco, he was leaning on his car.

'What are you doing here? Shouldn't you be at work?'

'Allowed to go early so I thought I would come and pick you up but if you want to walk then that's fine,' Draco smiled and got in the car. I got into the passenger seat.

'Thanks, my bag weighs a ton. You wouldn't believe how much stuff I found in my locker.'

'I expect I would believe it, judging on the state of your room,' Draco said smiling and started the car. He was right though, Draco was as neat and tidy as I was messy and disorganised. I played with the radio until I found a music station.

'How was your exam?' Draco asked.

'Good actually, it is such a relief to have them out of the way. How was your day?' I asked, hoping that he may tell me what was in the letter.

'Fine, fine.'

'Oh, I hope you don't mind but Ginny invited us to go over for dinner tonight.'

'And I suppose you said yes,' Draco said staring straight ahead at the road.

'Well, I did but if you don't want to go then I will ring her and say that something has come up and you can't come.'

'You would go without me then?'

'Yes, I mean we aren't joined at the hip and I haven't seen Harry and Ginny for a while and Hermione and Neville may be coming as well.'

'Quite the little reunion, then.'

'I suppose so yes.'

Draco pulled up on the driveway outside our house. He got out quickly and slammed the car door shut. I followed him up to the front door.

‘Draco, is something wrong? Don’t you want to come?’

‘Nothing is wrong.’ He unlocked the door.

‘So are you coming tonight?’

‘Yes, now I am going to have a shower,’ Draco said and walked upstairs.

I sighed and decided to sort out my bag before we have to leave. First though, I made myself a cup of tea and got some chocolate chip cookies out. I sat down at the kitchen table and got everything out of my bag and started to put it into piles – things to keep, things to recycle and things to throw away. I was about halfway through when Draco came into the kitchen. I looked up as he made himself a cup of coffee. He had changed into jeans and a shirt. He sat down opposite me and helped himself to a cookie.

‘All this came from your locker?’

‘Yes, unbelievable isn’t it?’ I said and returned to my sorting out. Draco started looking through some of my textbooks. He had always found what I learnt at college interesting – I suppose it was because it was so different to what he studied at Hogwarts.

‘This all looks rather complicated,’ Draco said after a while.

‘Well I am sure that I would think the same if I looked at one of your textbooks from Hogwarts.’

‘I suppose so,’ Draco looked thoughtful and I kicked myself for mentioning Hogwarts. Draco had never said anything specific but I had gathered that he was disappointed that he hadn’t managed to complete his NEWTs leaving Hogwarts as he left before the end of his sixth year. I think at first, even if he had been given the opportunity to, he wouldn’t have gone back, not after what happened.

But as time had gone on I wasn't as convinced. As I had mentioned to Ginny, Draco wasn't happy with his job at the bank...

'Hey, stop day dreaming. Look at all this mess!' Draco said trying to smile.

I muttered, 'slave driver' under my breath and get back to my sorting out. An hour later and I was all finished, I cleared the table and looked at my watch,

'Oh, look at the time. I should get changed.' Draco looked up from one of my History textbooks that he seemed to have become engrossed in. I ran up the stairs and into my room and threw all the stuff I had been carrying onto my desk. I decided to keep my jeans on and just change my top. I brushed my hair and pulled it back with a pretty hairclip. I changed my comfortable shoes for a pair of flip flops. I put some jewellery on and headed back downstairs. Draco was waiting by the door, he handed me my jacket.

'Are you sure you want to go?' I asked as I put on my jacket.

'Yes come on we are going to be late.'

It was a quiet journey to Harry and Ginny's flat which is a twenty minute drive away from our house is. I broke the silence,

'I can't wait till I finally pass my driving test, you know,' I had been having lessons for nearly a year now and had taken my test twice already but due to nerves mostly I had failed both. Draco, on the other hand, had typically only had a handful of lessons and had passed his driving test first time.

'You will do it eventually.'

'Sometime before I am seventy would be great.' We pulled up in the car park adjacent to the block of flats. Draco locked the car doors and I buzzed up to Harry and Ginny's.

'Hello?' It's Harry.

'Hey, Harry it's Rebecca and Draco.'

‘Come right up.’

The door opened and we entered the foyer of the block of flats. I pressed the button for the lift which didn’t take long to come. The door to Harry and Ginny’s flat was open.

‘Hello?’ I called out.

‘Come in, come in,’ Harry greeted us. ‘Can I take your coats?’ We handed over our jackets. He hung them up. ‘It is lovely to see you both.’

‘You too Harry,’ I said giving him a warm hug. Draco and Harry patted each other on the back.

‘Rebecca?’ I heard Ginny call out. ‘Could you help me with something?’

I smiled at Harry and Draco and follow Ginny’s voice into their spacious kitchen.

‘Great, could you just stir this sauce? I shall go and get changed. I will be back in a moment.’

‘Sure, it smells delicious.’ Ginny hurried off. I busied myself stirring the sauce. Ginny didn’t take long to change.

‘Oh thanks, Rebecca. I don’t really trust Harry with anything kitchen-wise as he can be a bit of a disaster.’ We hugged.

‘You are looking well, how was your exam?’ Ginny asked.

‘You are looking great as well. The exam was fine, I am so pleased that I have finished. Now is there anything else you want me to do?’

‘I think I have everything under control at the moment, why don’t you go through to the lounge?’ I smiled and walked down the hallway and into the lounge.

‘Panic over?’ Harry asked.

‘Oh yes, Ginny is in control of everything,’ I looked around the room.
‘Have you redecorated? It looks lovely.’

‘Thanks, it was Ginny’s scheme of course.’ I sat down next to Draco on the comfy sofa. The buzzer goes again,

‘Oh that will be Hermione and Neville. Draco would you mind getting some wine from the kitchen? Ginny will show you where it is. Thanks.’

Draco headed towards the kitchen as Harry opened the door for Hermione and Neville. A few minutes later Hermione practically ran into the lounge,

‘Rebecca, it has been too long,’ she said as we hugged tightly. Neville stands awkwardly besides her, I hugged him as well.

‘Well how are you both?’ I asked.

‘Fine, and you?’ Neville asked.

‘Great, I finished my exams today.’

‘Right, dinner is ready to be served. Please make your way to the dining room,’ Ginny said.

‘I’ll help you carry everything through,’ Hermione offered. Draco is already in the dining room with the wine. I smiled at him but he seemed hesitant to smile back. I tried to ignore this. He took the seat opposite me with Hermione and Neville opposite us, Harry and Ginny sat at either end of the table.

‘Well, this looks delicious,’ I complimented Ginny.

‘I just hope it tastes as good as it looks,’ Ginny said blushing.

The food is delicious though. Draco didn’t eat that much and seemed much quieter then normal.

‘What are your plans Ginny now you have finished Hogwarts?’ I asked.

'Well once Harry and I are back from our honey moon I am considering entering training to be a medi-witch, like Madame Pomfrey.' Harry, Hermione and Neville all worked in the Ministry of Magic. I didn't quite understand what they did exactly but it sounded important.

'That's sounds great.'

'Well hopefully my NEWT results will be good enough,' Ginny said and looked a bit worried.

'Oh, I am sure you will be fine,' I replied reassuringly.

'At least you got to finish your seven years at Hogwarts, some of us weren't so lucky,' Draco said bitterly.

There were a few moments of stunned silence where no one knew what to say next until Harry said softly,

'You could have come back to Hogwarts, you could probably even go back now.'

'What, and study with people three years younger then me? I don't think so and as for my reasons for not going back straightaway well killing my father...'

'Draco,' I whispered gently.

'... and seeing all those innocent people die put me off magic for a while. Why are you looking at me like that, Rebecca?'

'This isn't the time or the place, Draco.'

'Fine,' Draco said angrily but he didn't continue.

'How are the wedding plans going, Ginny?'

'I think I have everything organised at the moment. Harry and I had hoped to have a small wedding with just family and close friends but we can't seem to not invite anyone so have had to resign ourselves to

a large wedding,' Ginny said sighing but the twinkle in her eyes shows that deep down she didn't really mind the change in plans.

'Have you decided whether or not to let Daily Prophet be there?' Hermione asked.

'Well the financial benefits of them being there were rather attractive but in the end we decided that we would prefer it if they weren't there' Ginny said.

'Which they weren't very happy about but we did promise them an exclusive interview when we get back from our honeymoon,' Harry continued.

'Everybody I have spoken to about the wedding is so excited, wedding of the year most people are calling it,' Neville said excitedly. 'They all can't wait to see Harry Potter who brought about the downfall of Voldemort happily married to Ginny Weasley.'

Draco snorted. I looked at him puzzled.

'Is that what everyone thinks happened? Golden boy Harry Potter saves the world again?' Draco said loudly.

'Draco?' Please,' I said desperately to avoid a scene. But Draco ignored me,

'Taken all the credit then, Potter?'

'No,' Harry said quickly. 'Everyone who was involved was paid tribute to...'

'Even Rebecca?' Draco asked.

'No...' Harry started.

'Didn't think so, yet where would any of us be without what she did? Or have you all conveniently forgotten that?' Draco shouted and stood up.

'Draco, calm down,' I said.

‘No, I don’t think it is fair...’

‘I asked not to be named, I asked for them to pretend that I wasn’t even there,’ I said quietly.

‘What? Why?’ Draco asked.

‘I don’t know. I just wanted to get away, put it all behind me. Excuse me,’ I said. ‘I need to get some fresh air.’ I stood up and walked through the lounge and onto the small balcony that overlooks the river that runs past the block of flats. I sat down on one of the chairs. After a while I heard the door to the lounge open and then close.

‘Why didn’t you tell me?’ Draco asked and sat down on the chair next to me.

‘Never came up in conversation,’ I said and we just sat there in silence.

‘Rebecca, what are you thinking?’

‘Thinking? I’m thinking that I wish if you hadn’t wanted to come then you just didn’t come rather than behave like you have.’

‘You would have preferred if then, if I hadn’t have come,’ Draco said angrily.

‘I didn’t say that,’ I said quietly.

‘Sounded like that to me.’

‘Well, that’s because you are only hearing what you want to hear and you seem determined to pick a fight with me. All I meant was you didn’t have to come.’

‘You would have still come wouldn’t you?’

‘Yes.’

Draco stood up clearly annoyed so I continued,

‘Why does that bother you so much?’

'I thought we could spend the evening together celebrating your freedom from exams.'

'We are together.'

'Alone,' Draco said and turned round to look at me.

'How was I meant to know that? I am not a mind reader,' I said without thinking.

'Oh but you are, aren't you?'

'Not anymore.'

'I have always thought that was a bit of a shame, you were so talented,' Draco said his tone softer.

I found myself unable to think of a suitable answer so after a few minutes of silence I changed the subject,

'Draco? What was in that letter you received this morning?'

'What letter?'

'You know what letter, the one that since you read it put you in this strange mood.'

'Strange mood? I am fine.'

'No, you're not, if you don't want to tell me that's fine but don't take out your mood out on our friends and on me.'

'Our friends? Don't you mean your friends?'

'No, our friends.'

Draco laughed, 'I think I am right this time. They are more your friends than mine.'

'That's not the point...'

'Well maybe that's not your point but it is my point.'

‘What do you mean?’

‘Strange isn’t it? That despite your differences you are all such good friends?’

‘Differences?’

‘You being a stupid muggle and everyone else here being a witch or a wizard. It’s even stranger that you belong here perfectly whereas I don’t.’

‘Draco, what are you talking about? Of course you belong,’ I reached out and touched his hand. Draco pulled his hand away as if my touch had burnt him. He stood up quickly.

‘Draco?’

‘Don’t Rebecca, just don’t. Let’s not forget who your father was.’

‘My father? What has he got to do with this?’

‘Everything! If it wasn’t for him I would have been able to finish my NEWTs and have a proper job rather than the stupid muggle banking job that I have. But more importantly if it wasn’t for your father brainwashing all those people including my own father and mother then my father would still be alive today,’ Draco said heatedly.

‘Your father was going to kill me, you saved my life,’ I said.

‘I did, didn’t I?’

‘What’s that supposed to mean? Do you regret it or something?’

Draco said nothing.

‘I can see what you are saying about my father but he has gone now. We all need to move on...’

‘Why are you trying to be all understanding? You don’t get it do you? Every time I look at you, I remember how I killed my father.’

‘You had to, I mean, he could have killed us both.’

'You are no better than me though, just a murderer. I know you didn't actually kill Voldemort but we couldn't have killed him without your help.'

'My father killed so many people.'

'Including your own precious mother.'

'Draco, why are you being like this?' Tears started running down my face.

'I'm just reminding you of your roots. Potter may have come to terms with the fact that your father killed his parents but that doesn't mean that I have come to terms with having to kill my father for a stupid muggle,' he opened the door to the lounge. I followed him to the hallway, he took his jacket. 'I'm going home.'

I started to get my jacket as well but,

'I'm going home alone Rebecca. You stay here, I am sure someone will drop you off later.'

'But, we need to talk about this.'

'No buts, I want to be on my own.'

Before I can say anything else Draco left the flat and slammed the door shut behind him.

'He's gone, then?' Harry was behind me. Hermione and Ginny also appeared.

'Yes, would someone be able to give me a lift home,' I said quietly trying not to cry.

'Sure, Neville and I can drop you off,' Hermione said smiling.

'Thanks.'

'Would you like a cup of tea?' Ginny asked.

'Yes, please that would be great.' I followed them back through into lounge and sat down on one of the armchairs still shocked about what had just happened. Ginny handed me a cup of tea and asked,

'Are you ok Rebecca?'

'Yes, I think so.'

'I'm sure he didn't mean what he said,' Ginny said softly.

'You heard?' I looked up in surprise.

'Most of it, I am afraid,' Harry said.

'I just don't understand where it all came from,' I said and my tears started again.

'Ginny's right, Rebecca. I don't think he really meant it, he really cares about you, anyone can see that,' Hermione said.

'Sorry for ruining your evening,' I said.

'Don't be silly, you haven't ruined it. Now I could really do with some help with the washing up, would you mind?' Ginny asked.

'Ginny, leave Rebecca, I'll help,' Harry said.

'No, I don't mind, I would prefer to be doing something.

Ginny, Hermione and I walked to the kitchen.

'I could do this the magical way but I find the muggle way much more satisfying,' Ginny said smiling.

It took us nearly an hour to get the kitchen and dining room spick and span. We then joined Neville and Harry in the lounge. Conversation flowed but I didn't really take any of it in, I couldn't stop thinking about what Draco said.

'Rebecca?' Ginny was looking at me with concern in her eyes. 'Do you want to stay here tonight?'

'No, I don't want to be any trouble.'

'It wouldn't be any trouble,' Ginny said warmly.

'Thanks, for offering but I will have to go home at some point.'

'Well, if you are sure.'

'Yes,' I said and try to smile.

It was a quiet journey back to my house. Part of me was relieved to see that Draco's car was in the driveway and the light in the lounge was on as at least it means he was safely home.

'Do you want me to come in with you?' Hermione asked.

'No, it's fine. I shall probably head straight up to bed anyway.'

'Ok, I shall probably give you a ring tomorrow at some point.'

I thanked Neville and said goodbye. I took a deep breath before letting myself into the house which seemed deathly silent. The lounge door was open a crack and I glimpsed Draco sitting on the sofa just staring into space. I thought about going into him but decided instead to head upstairs.

Putting Things Straight

I had obviously fallen asleep as I awoke to the sound of someone walking around in my room. My heart skipped a beat and then started to race until I realised that the intruder was Draco who sighed and headed towards the door. I considered letting him leave and go back to sleep but curiosity got the better of me,

‘Draco,’ I said sleepily. ‘I am awake.’

‘Oh sorry, did I wake you?’

‘Yes, I am normally asleep at four thirteen in the morning,’ I said looking at my alarm clock, surprised by the time. Draco was still wearing his jeans and shirt from last night which gave the impression that he had been up all this time.

‘I shall let you go back to sleep then.’

‘Don’t be silly, Draco, look I am awake now. Sit down.’ Draco sat down at the foot of my bed hesitantly as I sat up and rubbed the sleep out of my eyes. Looking at Draco I realised that he doesn’t seem quite ready to talk about what obviously is bothering him yet. So I continued,

‘Sorry if I seemed a bit cranky when you when you woke me up. Ever since I was little I have always been afraid of people coming into my room while I am sleeping. I wouldn’t even let Father Christmas leave presents in my room, they had to be left downstairs,’ I said smiling. ‘Crazy, eh? I suppose though when you think about it you are probably at your most vulnerable.’

‘You looked really sweet asleep, really peaceful.’

‘That all changes though as soon as I open my mouth,’ I said and couldn’t help laughing.

‘How do you do that?’ Draco asked with a glint of sadness in his eyes.

‘Do what?’

‘Manage to laugh at yourself. I have noticed that you have a tendency to...’

‘Not take myself too seriously?’

‘Yes.’

‘Oh, I don’t know just have always been able to laugh at myself.’

‘Wish I could do it sometimes.’

‘Well it is a gift.’

‘It certainly is. But anyway I suppose I should let you know exactly why I am in your room in the early hours of the morning.’

‘I was starting to wonder.’

‘Well first of all I am really surprised that you are actually speaking to me after the way I behaved tonight. Please Rebecca, don’t interrupt me I have been practising this for the last hour and there is so much I need to say,’ he said as I tried to say something.

‘I am ashamed about how I behaved tonight it was completely unacceptable and first thing in the morning I shall be ringing everyone else to apologise. But I couldn’t wait until later to apologise to you. I am so sorry Rebecca, I said some really nasty things which I don’t mean, not any of them. I was just hitting out and you got in the way. I am not asking for your forgiveness yet Rebecca because I know you, you would just forgive me like that but I don’t deserve it. Sometimes I think that I don’t deserve you as a friend, and tonight was one of them. I crossed the line and I wish that I could go back and unsay all the things that I did but I can’t. I saw how much I was hurting you, but I didn’t stop, I just carried on. I was so horrible to you when you have been nothing but kind and generous to me. You do believe me, that I didn’t mean any of it don’t you?’

I bit my lip and think carefully about what to say. Draco seemed to take my hesitation as a sign that I didn’t believe him.

‘You don’t do you, well I suppose I can’t blame you.’

'Draco, I want to believe you so much but there is this huge part of me that thinks that what you said must have come from somewhere.'

'What happened that day really screwed me up you know. I think I am only now coming to terms with what happened.'

'Maybe we should have talked about it more, maybe it would have helped.'

'I don't know, anyway it's too late now. I honestly don't regret killing my father, I just have to come to terms with it. I don't regret saving your life, besides you saved mine. You aren't to blame for your father's actions. You are nothing like your father and I don't just mean that you are a muggle where he was a wizard. I can't believe I threw the fact that you are a muggle in your face. You are anything but stupid and deep down I don't really feel that muggles are any different to wizards and witches.'

'You do regret though not finishing your NEWTs don't you?'

'Yes, but that isn't your fault. I could have gone back but I wasn't ready. I suppose part of me is just jealous of you. You have your whole life in front of you, you are moving forward, off to university in September, I just don't want you to leave me behind.'

'Draco...'

'You cannot deny that Harry, Hermione, Ginny and Neville are more your friends than they are mine. Don't get me wrong they have been so accepting and so lovely but in some ways there is too much history there. You deserve friends like them, Rebecca.'

'Draco, you are my best friend. You have supported me through so much, I just want to help you in the same way.'

'I was stupid when I tried to pretend that the letter was nothing. You know me too well, you saw straight through me. You could see straightaway that it was bothering me. I should have just told you but I just couldn't,' he pulled out a piece of paper out of his pocket and held it out to me. 'It's a letter from my parent's lawyer. Apparently I am urgently required to see him, something to do with my mother.'

‘Your mother?’

‘I know, strange after all this time hearing about her. Not that I know anything new as the letter doesn’t go into details, just requests that I arrange to meet them as soon as possible.’

‘Woah, I don’t really know what to say apart from are you ok?’

‘I think so, I shall be leaving, well in a few hours really,’ he said looking at his watch.

‘Do you want me to come with you?’

‘No, thanks for offering but I don’t know how long it will take and I think it is something I need to do on my own.’

‘Oh, ok.’

‘You’ve forgiven me haven’t you?’ Draco said with a smile.

‘I think so. I just wished you had explained all this earlier.’

‘So do I.’

I got out of bed and pulled on my dressing gown and slippers.

‘What are you doing?’ Draco asked looking confused.

‘Well there is no point going back to sleep now, I can help you get ready.’

‘Ready?’

‘Well have you packed?’

‘No.’

‘And you will need to change your clothes.’

‘Yes, miss.’

‘Come here cheeky,’ I said and pulled him into a tight embrace.

'I can be so silly sometimes,' Draco whispered in my ear.

'Yes and stubborn and a little crazy, need I go on? Just don't stop talking to me again ok?'

'Ok, thanks for the hug. It was just what I needed,' Draco said and pulled away.

It took us the next hour and a half to get Draco completely sorted. I had to take control of proceedings as he wasn't being his normal organised self and kept daydreaming.

'Draco, you need to tie your shoes rather than just keep playing with them,' I said softly. He looked up at me with a far away expression. Rather than explaining what I had been saying I bent down and tied up his laces.

'Ok, I think that is everything,' I said.

'Right...'

'Do you want some breakfast? A cup of tea or coffee?'

'No thank you, I think I should just go.'

'Ok, well I hope everything goes as well as it can do. Don't worry about me, I will be fine. Just concentrate on what you have to do,' we hugged. 'Take care of yourself.'

'Bye, thanks for everything.'

I helped Draco to the car with his bags and waved him off. It seemed quiet in the house after all the rushing around. I pottered about for a bit and tidy up and then decided to go and have a long hot bath.

The telephone rung, 'hello?' I said.

'Hello, Rebecca, it's Ginny. How are you?'

'I'm fine.'

'We've have just had a very apologetic phone call from Draco, he said he was calling from a service station, is everything ok?'

'Did he not explain where he was going?'

'No.'

'Oh, well he got a letter yesterday from his parent's lawyers requesting an urgent meeting. It is something to do with his mother.'

'And that's what put him in that awful mood.'

'Yes.'

'Has he apologised to you?'

'Yes, at four this morning. We had a long chat, he explained everything and then I helped him get ready.'

'How long will he be away for?'

'He didn't know, I suppose for as long as it takes.'

'Must have been horrible for him, the letter coming like that out of the blue.'

'Yes, I think it shook him up a bit.'

'So, what are your plans for today?'

'I am going to chill out completely with no more revision or anything.'

'Sounds lovely, well if you need anything don't hesitate to contact me. Have a good day.'

I found myself wondering into Draco's room again. He had been gone for a whole month. Ginny, Harry, Neville and Hermione had all been wonderful and kept inviting me to dinner and the girls on days out shopping. But nothing I did could distract me from the fact that I was missing Draco awfully. We had grown so close after Hogwarts and had shared so much. I hadn't heard that much from him, only very

brief letters which just told me not to worry and that he was fine. I did worry though. I had started to spend time in Draco's room when I was missing him the most. Part of me knew that I shouldn't really but I couldn't seem to stop now. It always looked the same, incredibly tidy. I sat down on the bed and felt tears welling up. I told myself off for being so silly and put on some of Draco's favourite music and just laid on his bed.

'Rebecca? What are you doing?' I was awoken by none other than Draco.

'Draco? Oh it is so good to see you,' I jumped up and hugged him. He seemed tense at first but then relaxed into the hug.

'It's good to see you too,' he said quietly. I pulled away and looked at him carefully. He looked exhausted and was definitely paler and thinner than he was a month ago.

'You look exhausted and I bet you just came in here to crash and you found me lying on your bed, how embarrassing. I'm sorry for invading your privacy, I was just missing you a lot. I shall go now and let you get some sleep,' I said quickly and started to walk to the door but I felt someone grip my wrist. I turned around slowly and waited for Draco to say something but he was facing away from me. 'Do you want me to stay?' I whispered. Draco nodded. I took his hand and led him gently to the bed. I took off his shoes and then his jacket and tie. 'Is that better? Do you want something to eat? Something to drink?'

'Don't leave me,' Draco whispered.

Slightly surprised, 'ok, I'm right here.' I sat down on the bed next to him. He seemed restless and stood up and straightened some things out in his room.

'Sorry that I was so long.'

'You have nothing to say sorry for, have you got everything sorted out?'

'Yes. What have you been up to?'

‘Helping Ginny with the wedding mostly. She got her NEWT results last week and she got the grades to train to be a medi-witch.’

‘That’s good, I haven’t missed your results have I?’

‘No, they won’t be out for nearly another month.’

‘Nervous?’

‘Sometimes I am, sometimes I’m not.’

‘You’ll be fine. Rebecca?’ Draco stood completely still, he was facing away from me.

‘Yes?’

‘My mother is dead, she committed suicide.’

I felt my eyes widen in shock.

‘Draco...’

‘Apparently two years in Azkaban was too much for her. She regretted all that she did though and wished that she had changed sides like I did. She was proud of me. She wrote all this in a letter. I had to organise the funeral and then sort out the Manor which was left to me. I packed it all up though and it has been sold now. That’s why I was so long,’ I heard a slight wavering in his voice. I got up and gently put my hand on his shoulder.

‘I could have helped, you should have told me,’ I said gently.

‘I didn’t want you to be involved. It’s all over now.’

I removed my hand from his shoulder, ‘why won’t you let me help you?’

‘Because I don’t deserve you.’

‘Draco, look at me. Draco.’

He hesitated but turned to face me.

'Enough of the you don't deserve me rubbish, I am no better a person than you. I just would have liked to have been with you, helped you in some way.'

'You did help me, the thought that I would eventually be coming back here kept me going,' Draco whispered.

'Well, I am glad that you did come back because I have missed you so much.'

'Really?'

'Yes, silly why else would I be here in your room? Moping like some kind of love sick puppy? What are you laughing at?'

'Nothing, nothing.'

'More seriously though, do you want to talk about it?'

'Not right now.'

'Fair enough. I shall leave you to get some sleep.'

'Well actually I was thinking that your room is so far away that you might as well sleep here.'

'Draco?'

'Rebecca, I've missed you too. Look we will sleep head to toe. I just don't really want to be on my own tonight,' Draco looked down at the floor.

'Oh, ok.'

'Great, you get comfortable and I shall go and put my pyjamas on.'

I go and got my pillows from my room and put them at the foot end of Draco's bed. I climbed under the duvet and rested my head back on the pillows.

'Ready for lights off?' Draco asked brightly.

‘Yes.’

The room goes completely black and I felt Draco getting into bed next to me.

‘Your feet better not smell,’ I whispered laughing.

‘I hope yours don’t either.’

‘Rebecca?’

‘Yes?’

‘Thanks for this I knew I would feel better as soon as I saw you.’

‘S’ok, anything more I can do to help then just let me know,’ I smiled to myself and closed my eyes.

‘Rebecca?’

‘Ummm,’ I could feel myself falling asleep and I couldn’t quite hear what Draco said next but it sounded like,

‘You are really beautiful when you are asleep but you are even more beautiful when you are awake.’

A/N – well it may be obvious but there is only one more chapter to go. Sorry that there was such a big time jump in this chapter but I didn’t really know how else to do it. Anyway take care of yourselves.

A Happy Ending

'I think I will take that Rebecca, I think you have had enough.' Draco took the glass from me.

'What do you mean? I am enjoying myself.'

'You are drunk, Rebecca, either that or you have not enjoyed yourself the whole time we have been living together as you have never acted like you are acting now.'

'Is it so wrong that I am enjoying myself? Why are you acting like this, Draco?' I turned away from him.

'Oh don't mind me, go back to being the centre of attention, the one who helped destroy Voldermort. Go back to all your little friends who have seem to forgotten that you ran away from all this when things got too hard.' I turned back, furious.

'I don't know what is wrong with you, you know how nervous I was about coming today. I am so sorry if I am enjoying myself but it is turning out to be much better then I thought it would be. You know my reasons for running away. And for your information I haven't touched a drop of alcohol tonight. Go on taste it if you don't believe me. It's just fruit juice.' Draco took a sip and realised that I have been telling the truth. I walked away from him. He grabbed my arm.

'Rebecca, wait.'

'Let go of me.' I pulled my arm away and ran outside. I hid behind a tree when he came quickly after me looking for me. When he had disappeared out of sight, I walked in the opposite direction and find myself by the lake. It was a beautiful evening, I sat down on the grass and took off my shoes and dangled them in the cool water. I felt so angry at Draco and yet confused at why he behaved the way he did. I had been enjoying myself but deep down I still felt out of place, I didn't belong here, not really I was a muggle, there wasn't anything anyone could do would change that. I tried to think about something else. It had been a lovely day, Harry and Ginny seemed so happy, so well suited to each other. The weather had been perfect, really sunny and clear. Ginny had looked so pretty in her simple long white dress

and her hair arranged in ringlets that framed her face beautifully. Oh, why did Draco have to go and ruin it?

‘I’ve been looking for you.’ I looked at the lake and in its reflection I saw a tall boy standing next to me with light blonde hair. Draco. He sat next to me.

‘I’m sorry, Rebecca, I was so nasty to you.’

I said nothing. He reaches out for one of my hands.

‘Please speak to me Rebecca, please.’

‘What do you want me to say?’ I asked

‘Tell me how you feel.’

‘Angry I suppose but mostly upset. Why did you behave like that, Draco? What had I done so wrong?’ I looked at him. He looked away.

‘Nothing, you have done nothing wrong.’

‘Then why?’

‘You looked so happy. It hurt when I thought I could be losing you.’

‘Losing me? What on earth are you talking about?’

‘The past two years have been amazing, Rebecca. I have felt happier than I have ever done before and that is all down to you. The truth is, I have been offered an opportunity to work at the Ministry of Magic and study for my NEWTs at the same time’

‘Really, that’s amazing, you have accepted haven’t you.’

‘No.’

‘Why not? This is just what you have been waiting for. I know that you have never been completely satisfied with your muggle job.’

‘I didn’t want to change things.’

‘Change things? Why do things have to change? Oh I see, does it mean you will have to move out? Well don’t worry about that, I will be fine.’

‘I don’t doubt that for a second, you are an amazing girl. But if I take the job I don’t have to move out.’

‘Then what is your problem?’

‘How would you feel about me working as a wizard? I know how you feel about magic.’

‘Draco,’ I said confused. ‘You are a wizard, you have been a wizard the whole time we have been living together. The fact that you haven’t picked up your wand in all that time doesn’t change that you were born a wizard and rather a good one and that.’

‘I thought you hated magic.’

‘No, I am a muggle. I just don’t completely belong here, not like you do.’

‘I think you do belong here, more then you think you do.’

‘Maybe,’ I said.

‘So you wouldn’t mind if I took the position?’

‘No, silly.’ I said and hit him softly on the arm.

‘Ow.’

‘That did not hurt.’

‘It did so.’

‘Well you deserve it. Next time something like this happens can you talk to me about rather then acting all psycho on me?’

‘I was a little crazy wasn’t I?’

‘Yes. Shall we get back to the party?’ I put my shoes back on and Draco helped me stand up. I smoothed out my dress. ‘Well, do I look presentable?’

Draco looked at me strangely, he gently rearranged a piece of my hair and tucked it behind my ear. My heart fluttered. He whispered, ‘you look beautiful, Rebecca. You always do to me.’

My heart started racing, we were standing so close to each other. We leant in to each other and our lips were about to touch when,

‘Rebecca? Oh, there you are. Ginny wants you.’ It was Harry.

Draco pulled away. ‘Bloody Potter,’ he said under his breath. I kissed him gently on the cheek.

‘I shall see you later.’ I smiled and walked away towards Harry.

‘Sorry, I wasn’t interrupting anything was I?’ Harry said clearly embarrassed.

‘Oh, no, he shall just have to wait. Where’s your beautiful wife?’

Harry smiled, ‘she is rather beautiful isn’t she? Mind you, you don’t look bad yourself, Draco is a lucky chap.’

‘Well thank you.’

‘I have to say though it is about time.’

‘What do you mean?’

‘Well it’s obvious how much you care about each other.’

I smiled.

We met Ginny who was looking a bit flustered standing with Hermione, ‘oh Rebecca, where have you been? Everything is falling apart. We were meant to start the dancing five minutes ago but the singer hasn’t turned up for the first song. What are we going to do?’

‘Give me five minutes, head back onto the dance floor. You shall dance with your Prince Charming.’ Ginny gave me a hug and headed back inside with Harry.

Hermione turned to me, ‘what are you going to do?’

‘I haven’t quite figured that out yet but I still have five minutes, I better go and talk to the band.’

Five minutes later, I couldn’t believe what I was about to do. I felt so nervous but I had to think that I was doing it for Ginny and Harry. The leader of the band, Mike turned to me,

‘Are you ready, sweetheart?’

‘As I will ever be.’ I looked down at my hands and they were shaking.

Mike noticed, ‘you will be fine. I shall introduce you first.’ He left me and goes onto the stage.

I was strangely reminded of the time when I was introduced to the rest of the Hogwarts students. Well I thought to myself they didn’t turn out too badly did it?

‘We are now ready for the dances to begin, sorry for the delay. Would the bride and groom please make their way to the dance floor for the first dance? Our normal singer has been unable to attend but one of the bridesmaids has kindly stepped in, so please give a warm welcome to Rebecca Jones.’

I walked up the steps and onto the stage. The crowd were applauding loudly. Well, they haven’t heard me sing yet I thought to myself, wondering why on earth I had volunteered to do this. My singing voice was ok, but I had never sung in public, well not on my own. I walked over to the microphone, I had to have a microphone as I couldn’t magically project my voice. The piano started to play the introduction of the song, I licked my lips, my mouth felt so dry. Right here I go I thought as the piano reached where I would come in. I opened my mouth and started to sing. To my surprise my voice came out ok. I looked down at the dance floor and saw Harry and Ginny

smiling at me as they danced closely. I loved this song, it was one of my favourites, I knew exactly why Ginny and Harry had chosen it as their song. I started to enjoy the song and began to relax into it, I browsed the crowd again and saw Hermione smiling at me. I caught her eye and she blinked at me and put her thumbs up. I smiled and then I saw him, Draco was standing to the side of the dance floor and was staring at me, he looked surprised. Before I knew it the song was coming to the end. When I finished it there was a round of applause and some cheers. I looked at Draco, he was smiling broadly and was clapping the loudest.

‘Thanks.’ I said into the microphone and walked off the stage.

Draco ran up to me, ‘you dark horse, Rebecca, I never knew you could sing like that you were amazing.’ He gave me a hug. He gently rested his head on mine, I reached out and stroked his face. He looked at me, my heart fluttered.

‘Rebecca? Sorry.’ It was Harry again.

‘Bloody hell, Potter do you mind?’ Draco said pulling away.

‘Sorry, it’s just the guests are going mad, they would love you to sing again Rebecca.’

‘Go on then little one, go and sing your little heart out.’ Draco whispered in my ear as he took both my hands gently.

‘You don’t mind.’ I whispered back.

‘No, we shall just have to wait, besides I would love to hear you sing again. Don’t sing all evening though otherwise I shall have to come and drag you off the stage to dance with me.’

‘Three songs, I promise. And then I am all yours.’

I kissed Draco on the cheek and followed Harry back on the stage. After a quick discussion with Mike we decided on some more upbeat songs. They were all well-known muggle songs but the band also played at some muggle events so knew them as well. I looked down at the dance floor and smiled as everyone seemed to be having fun.

Harry and Ginny looked so perfect in each others arms. Draco watched me the whole time, my heart fluttered whenever I make eye contact with him. After my first song he held out one of his hands and signalled two, two songs left. I realised how much I loved singing, I used to sing in the choir at my old school, the one before Hogwarts and made a note to myself to check out the choir at university. The crowd seemed a little upset when I finished and took my bow,

‘Sorry,’ I said. ‘I am on a promise.’

Draco walked over to the stage and lifted me off it.

‘Put me down, you lunatic. I was coming you know.’

‘Well, I didn’t want to take any chances.’

The music slowed down to a slow song. Draco placed me gently on the floor and took me by the hand. He led me to the dance floor. He placed my hands around his neck and placed his on my hips. My heart was beating so fast, I felt almost dizzy with happiness. I let him lead me around the dance floor. Draco turned out to be an amazing dancer.

‘You are quite the dark horse yourself. You haven’t stepped on my toes once.’ I said smiling.

‘Do you want me to?’

‘No, No, this is fine.’ It was indeed fine, I didn’t want the song to end it felt so right being in his arms. When the song came to an end, he stroked my hair. I touched his face. Our lips touched and we kissed. My heart felt like it was going to jump out of my chest.

We kissed desperately. Draco was the first to break away, he whispered, ‘you have no idea how long I have wanted to do that.’

‘Probably just as long as I have wanted you to do that,’ I whispered back. We kissed again, this time more softly.

‘You know, you aren’t a bad kisser either,’ I said smiling.

'I haven't quite decided on your kissing skills, we shall have to kiss again.' Draco said with a twinkle in his eyes.

'Oh no.' I said and we kissed again.

'I won't let anything or anybody hurt you, little one. Not anymore.' He hugged me tightly.

Harry and Ginny walked up, 'Oh, I'm glad you actually let me kiss her this time Potter.' Draco said.

'Sorry about that Draco, my timing has never been good.'

'Rebecca, thank you so much, you were amazing. We should have hired you in the first place,' Ginny said and we hugged.

'Well, I wasn't planning on singing but it seemed the only thing to do, besides it is a bridesmaid's duty to help the bride's day run as smoothly as possible.'

'You wouldn't catch me singing like that,' it was Hermione. 'Bridesmaid duty or not, I wouldn't do that. Rebecca, wow is all I can say.' She hugged me tightly.

'And I am pleased to see that you and Draco have finally got your acts together.' Hermione said smiling.

Draco hugged me round my waist and put his head on my head and said, 'I know, finally.'

The End!

A/N – Wow I can't believe I managed to write 22 chapters. When I started I told my beta Claire that I could only see about ten chapters happening. I am thinking about writing a sequel, which will probably not be as long but I shall write a few chapters of it first and see how it goes. Thanks to all my reviewers and for your encouragement, I hope you all liked how it all ended.